

226
W52

BISHOP G. M. MATHEWS
MEMORIAL LIBRARY

* * * * *

Library of

The Bonebrake Theological Seminary

Donated from the library of

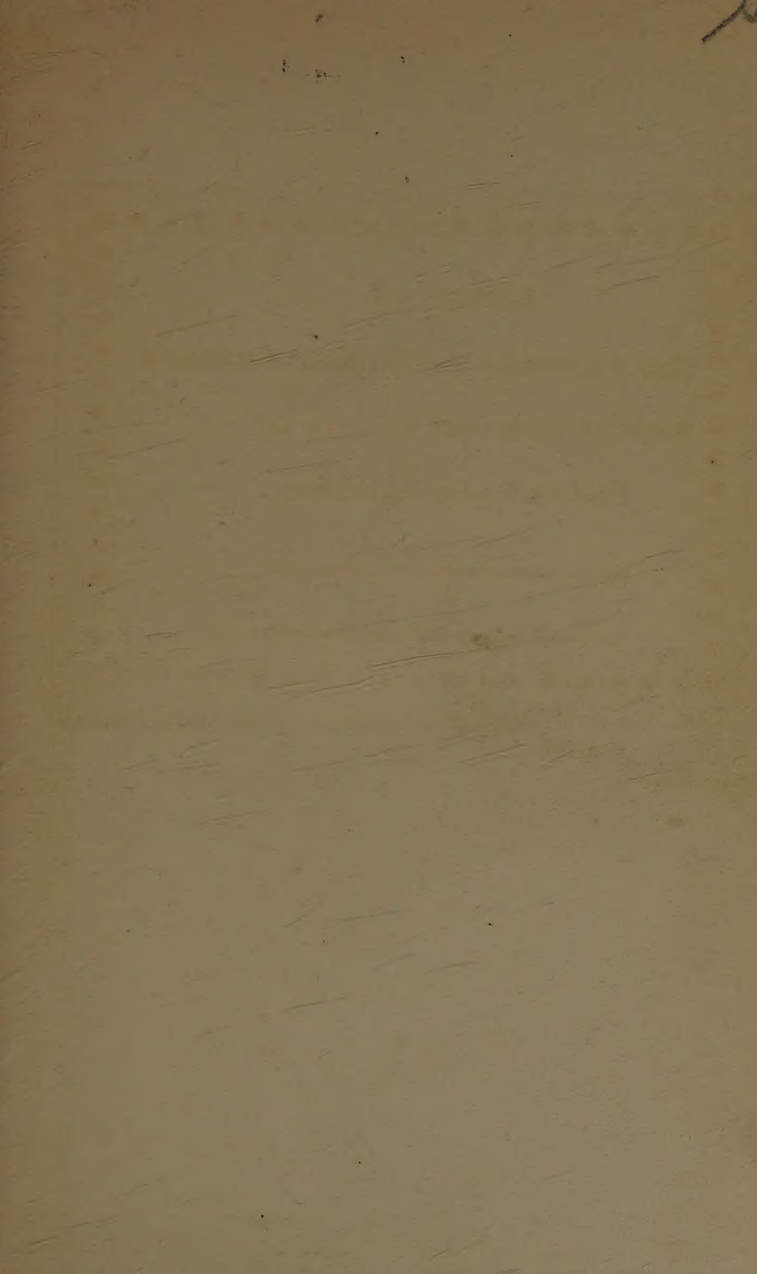
Bishop G. M. Matthews

226

W52

* * * * *

NO LONGER PROPERTY OF
UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY LIBRARY



MATTHEW

MATTHEW

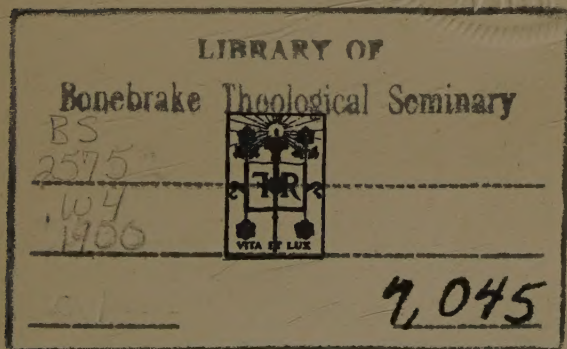
The Genesis of the New Testament

Its Purpose, Character and Method

BY

REV. HENRY G. WESTON, D.D.

PRESIDENT
CROZER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

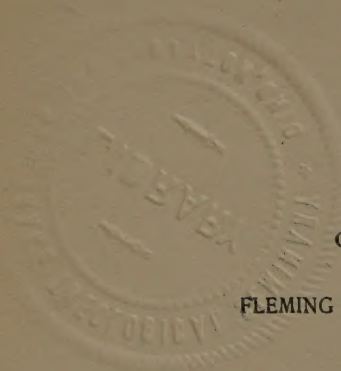


NEW YORK CHICAGO TORONTO

Fleming H. Revell Company

Publishers of Evangelical Literature

NO LONGER PROPERTY OF
UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY LIBRARY



Copyright, 1900

by

FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

Introduction

This page was reserved for a few words from one whose love for the Bible and interest in its teachings was an all-pervading element in his life, but who now with clear vision sees all things in the city which has no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God lightens it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

Last summer, at Northfield, Mr. Moody urged me to prepare for publication the material now issued in this book. During the conversation he told me that he had always declined to write introductions, but if I wished he would write one for me. I gladly accepted the unexpected offer; there was no man from whom such a service would be more welcome. When the time came for the fulfillment of his promise, his earthly work was finished, and the book must go out on its errand without the kind words which would have come from his pen.

I trust I may be pardoned if I employ the space thus left vacant to say a word in loving memory of one whose delight was in the law of the Lord, and between whom and all lovers of the Bible there was a strong tie of affection. For Mr. Moody's life and work were the special product, as they were an exemplification, of a revealed Christianity. It was because Christ was in him that he was what he was. This master of assemblies, preaching to more persons than any other man has addressed since the Apostolic age, this man, with his wonderful influence over congregations and individuals, retaining his power undiminished to the close, bringing men of every class and condition, in every city and State in the Union, in England, Scotland, and Ireland, to a knowledge of themselves and of Christ which transformed their whole lives, this man of consummate tact and skill and judgment, whose sincerity no one ever questioned, whose character was never sullied by so much as a breath of suspicion, whose death was followed by universal eulogy, was what he was and did what he did because from the very beginning of the time when Christ laid hold of him he gave himself unreservedly to him who sealed him for his own. His

unique success cannot be explained by the possession of any special natural endowment, by his education and training, by his magnetic personality; the secret of his wonderful career was in his complete surrender to the grace of God. From the hour that the new life entered his soul it had complete control. It awoke him to a new existence; it summoned into activity every energy of his being; it vitalized his whole nature. I have occasionally seen a man whose conversion was an era in his intellectual life; but I have never known one in whom there was at once such an awakening of every latent power, resulting in so complete and permanent a revolution. In him were illustrated the words of the Apostle, "He died for all, that they who live should not live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again. So then, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." Henceforth he could say, "One thing I do." For him to live was Christ, Christ in every impulse and affection.

That life he nourished by the word of God. He realized in the full our Lord's words, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." He hid that word in his heart, ready for use in every emergency. He hid it there as the seed is hidden in the soil, that it may sprout and grow and bring forth fruit.

He devoted his life, first, to winning men to Christ, counting everything but loss unless this was attained; and when this was accomplished, his burning desire was to have that life which had been received enriched, that it might be a source of blessing to others. So he dotted the fair plain and the city with buildings where poor young men and women could obtain that education which would transform their lives. And here again may be seen the Christ in him, that Christ who wrought his miracles never to endow the subject of the miracle with a supply of good things, but always to impart life; life to the dead eye, the dead ear, the dead tongue, the diseased or paralyzed or dead body.

By the grace of God he was what he was.

H. G. W.

December 30, 1899.

Author's Note

THE principles by which I have sought to be guided in these studies in the gospel according to Matthew are, first, that the New Testament must be interpreted, as every other book should be, by its purpose, character and method. It is a divine and human history, written by inspiration of the Holy Spirit in accordance with the universal laws of language. It is an Oriental book, composed hundreds of years ago, under Syrian skies, in the language, and according to the mental methods of that age and race and country.

Next, all true interpretation is sympathetic. Unless the student enters into the spirit of the author he cannot understand what is written. The New Testament is the believer's book. It is not addressed to opponents, critics, cavilers, or speculators. No external evidence is cited to confirm its statements, nor does our Lord guard His language against distortion or perversion. The gospel is love speaking to love.

As the truths of Christianity were not discovered by the eye, the ear, or the mind, but were revealed by the Spirit, the one question to be asked by the student is, What thought did the Holy Spirit intend to convey by the words He has employed and the place He has assigned them.

Necessarily, a most important task of the interpreter is to ascertain the sequence of thought in the mind of the inspired writer. In this the science of interpretation is like every other science ; its one aim is to discover and unfold the plan of God. The knowledge of a phenomenon whose relations cannot be ascertained is of no value. A text without a history and purpose is like an isolated life—worthless.

HENRY G. WESTON.

CROZER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,
Upland, Pa.

Contents

PAGE

PART ONE

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW—ITS PURPOSE AND CHARACTER	II
---	----

PART TWO

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW—AN EXPOSITION	37
The Genealogy and Birth of Jesus Christ	39
The Infancy of Jesus	41
The Forerunner	43
The Baptism of Jesus	45
The Temptation	46
The Entrance to the Galilean Ministry	51
The Kingdom of Heaven Portrayed	54
The Righteousness of the Kingdom	59
The Motive of Righteousness	62
The Claims of Righteousness	63
The Judgment of Righteousness	64
The Miracles of the Kingdom	66
Sanctification, Redemption, Life	67
The Propagation of the Kingdom	71
The Reception of the Kingdom	75
Antagonism to the Kingdom Results in the Ex- clusion of all Ties of the Flesh	78
The Mysteries of the Kingdom	84
The New Order of Miracles	89
The Holiness of the Kingdom Defined	93
The Fundamental Methods of the Kingdom De- clared	97

	PAGE
The Transfiguration	102
The Kingdom Awaiting its Consummation . .	103
The Final Presentation of the King to the Jewish Nation	107
The Interval Between Our Lord's Departure from the Earth and His Return	111
Preparations for the Delivery of Jesus to His Enemies	117
The Condemnation of Christ	123
The Denial by Peter	129
Trial Before Pilate	132
The Death of Christ	134
The Resurrection of Christ	140
The Commission	141
SYNOPSIS OF THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW . .	143

The Gospel of Matthew—Its Purpose and
Character

The Gospel of Matthew—Its Purpose and Character

THE Bible is the history of salvation. The gospels are the history of salvation as wrought out by our Lord Jesus Christ in His earthly life, death, burial, and resurrection. They are not biographies of Christ, nor are they collections of interesting incidents in His life. They are written for the believer, giving the history of salvation in its successive aspects and stages, aspects of the work of Christ, and stages of the salvation in process. Each gospel prepares the way for its successor, each telling afresh the story of the life, death, and resurrection, from its own point of view, each beginning at a higher level than the preceding. The gospels are vitally related to one another, and the four constitute an organic whole. It follows that no one of these gospels can be understood unless its relation to the whole and to every other be comprehended.

The gospel according to Matthew is the opening book—the Genesis—of the New Dispensation. The Old Testament closes with the Jewish nation looking for the fulfillment of the prophecies of a King who shall reign in righteousness, under whom the earth shall be filled with the glory of

the Lord. Its pages glow with the predictions of the splendors which shall mark the Messianic reign. The Jews are God's chosen people, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation set apart for God's peculiar possession (Ex. xix. 5, 6), through whom all nations are to be blessed. But for these many centuries Jerusalem has been in ruins; the temple is no more; its altar fires are gone out; the sacrifices prescribed by the Levitical ritual are impossible; Judea is deserted by her people; the Jews are scattered and peeled, a by-word and hissing. The recognized people of God are now a church, a body differing radically and generically from the Jewish nation, and indeed from all human organizations. To them its principle of union is unknown; it recognizes none of their distinctions and divisions. In this new body—the church,—all national peculiarities, all diversities of birth, culture, social position or possessions are swallowed up. In this church the Mosaic rites are forbidden; the Jews are conspicuous by their absence, the Gentiles forming the overwhelming majority. We see no signs of the accomplishment of the Old Testament prophecies, no traces of the splendor predicted of the reign of the Messiah. He was put to death as a malefactor, and has left the earth still under the power of Satan while the world which despised and rejected Him goes on its old sinful course.

What has caused this strange condition? If the promises of God are true and His gifts and

calling are unrepented of by Him, how are these astounding facts to be explained and justified? Are they consistent with the divine character? Can they be shown to be in accordance with the divine declarations? Do they accomplish the divine purposes? Is the course which Christ pursued, and is His present position capable of reconciliation with the Old Testament?

The gospel according to Matthew answers these questions. It shows how the present condition came into being; it justifies the course which God has pursued and is pursuing by constant appeal to the Old Testament, to the divine method in nature, and to the principles which govern human life. It conducts us from the position of the Old Covenant to that of the New, expounds the place and purpose of the Old Dispensation, declares the principles and methods of the Christian Dispensation, showing at every step their accord with the Old Testament. It is in its structure systematic, fundamental and official, disregarding chronological sequence—the order of events—for the sake of logical arrangement and regular development of its thought. Our Lord's instructions in Luke are largely conveyed in conversations, in John in dialogues, in Matthew in discourses in the strictest sense, marked, as is the whole gospel, by unity, progress, symmetry, and completeness. The teleological consecutiveness of the gospel is perfect, not a sentence which is not in its logical place, not one which is not a link in the chain. The twenty miracles recorded

by Matthew follow a regular sequence, beginning with the cure of leprosy, the symbol of sin, and ending with the withering of the fig-tree, the type of judgment. The arrangement of the parables is equally systematic, commencing with that of the sower scattering the seed of the kingdom, and closing with that of the talents, the adjudication of the last day. In the method of Christ's teaching, two stages are distinctly marked. In the first twelve chapters, his statements are direct and explicit. In the thirteenth chapter, with the recognition of the judicial blindness of the Jews, our Lord introduces a new mode of teaching—by parables. The topics of Christ's teaching are equally distinct, divided by the sixteenth chapter. Previously to the recognition of His true character and nature by His disciples, His instruction has reference to His person and nature. Who is Christ is the question in every miracle and underlying every controversy. When this is rightly answered, the manner of redemption, by death and resurrection, is revealed. In other words, the person and the work of Christ—Christ and Him crucified—are taught in their order.

This gospel, by necessity of its place and purpose, is the gospel of the Jewish King Rejected. These three words determine the gospel with all it contains and all it reveals.

1. It is the Jewish gospel. By this is not meant that it is written for Jews, either Christian or unbelieving, any more than when we say that

it is the kingly gospel we mean that it is addressed to kings. It is the record of salvation offered to the Jews, constantly recognizing their place and relation. The Jews are the children of the kingdom, and Gentile is synonymous with heathen: (vi. 7; viii. 12; xviii. 17). The point of departure, the phenomena, the divine appellations, the symbolism, are all Jewish. Matthew explains no facts, no laws or customs peculiar to the nation, nor does he describe the position of places in Judea, as do the other Evangelists. Only in this gospel is Jerusalem the holy city (iv. 5), the city of the great King (v. 35), and the Jewish temple God's dwelling-place (xxiii. 21), the holy place (xxiv. 15), the temple of God (xxvi. 6). Here only does Christ assume the sacred and sanctifying power of the temple and the altar (xxiii. 17-21), and draw from the altar service illustrations of obedience to the divine requirements (v. 23, 24). The freedom of the nation from the unclean spirit of idolatry is distinctly recognized (xii. 43-45); authority over unclean spirits is given to the apostles (x. 1), but in striking contrast to the other Synoptic gospels there is no instance in Matthew of possession by a spirit designated as unclean. The authority of those who sit in Moses' seat is asserted, and obedience to their official commands enforced (xxiii. 1-3). Our Lord's genealogy is traced to Abraham and is marked by the great events in Jewish history. The symbolism is Jewish. Not to speak of other examples, the symbolism of numbers pervades the gospel.

Seven, ten, twelve with their multiples repeatedly appear. The genealogy is arranged in three fourteens. There are fourteen parables divided by place and purpose into two sevens. There are twenty miracles separated in like manner into two tens. The number seven always divides itself into four and three, the human and divine. The beatitudes, the parables, the seven petitions of the Lord's prayer are examples of this.

2. It is the kingly gospel. The genealogy is the royal succession, giving the heirs to the throne. His first appellation from human lips is found in the words of the Magi, Where is he that is born King of the Jews. Of His birthplace it is said, Out of thee shall come a Governor who shall rule my people Israel. In Matthew, John the Baptist cries, Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand; in Mark and Luke He preaches the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. The authority of the sermon on the mount astonishes the multitude as they recognize the tone not of an interpreter, but of the Lawgiver Himself. The parables are all of the kingdom of heaven. Luke begins his parables—A certain man—went down from Jericho, made a great supper, had two sons. The parables of Matthew, with three exceptions, begin: The kingdom of heaven, etc. Only in this gospel is it said: The Son of Man shall send His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity (xiii. 41); here only is the word preached the word of the kingdom

(xiii. 19); and that which in other books of the New Testament is the gospel, is in Matthew, with a single exception, the gospel of the kingdom (iv. 23; ix. 35; xxiv. 14). Here only does our Lord give Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven (xvi. 19). Only in this gospel, and here twice, does he speak of the Son of Man sitting on the throne of His glory (xix. 28; xxv. 31); here only does he gather all nations before his throne for judgment, and apply to himself those wonderful words, Then shall the king say unto them, And the king shall answer and say unto them (xxv. 34, 40). At the royal entry into Jerusalem the multitudes cry, and the children in the temple repeat the ascription, Hosanna to the Son of David, a title which recognizing Him as the Jewish king sorely displeased the chief priests and scribes, and drew from them a strong remonstrance (xxi. 9-16). Matthew alone tells us that in the closing hours of Christ's life, more than ten legions of angels awaited His word (xxvi. 53); that at His death the earth was shaken, and the rocks were rent, and the graves were opened (xxvii. 51-53)—heaven, earth, and hades all acknowledging their king; and the gospel closes with the assurance that in heaven and in earth Christ has exclusive authority (xxviii. 19).

The kingly character of Christ in this gospel differs from that in Luke and John. Here He is born king of the Jews (ii. 2); in Luke His kingship is in the future, appointed to Him by His Father (xxii. 29); in John He reigns now, but His

domain is different from that of either of the preceding gospels (John xviii. 36, 37); on His head are many crowns (Rev. xix. 12). And because in Matthew and John only does He now occupy, in the one His innate, and in the other His essential, office, in those gospels only is the prophecy of Zechariah quoted: Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold the King cometh unto thee sitting on an ass's colt (Matt. xxi. 5; John xii. 15). Luke says: The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David (i. 32), a promise yet to be accomplished; and in the parables of the talents, He represents the nobleman as going into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return (xix. 12). In Matthew our Lord is worshipped from His birth (ii. 2, 8, 11); in Luke not until His ascension (xxiv. 52).

3. It is the gospel of rejection. Compare the introduction of this gospel with that of Luke, the gospel of acceptance. In the one the advent of Christ is hailed with joy by all. Zacharias, Elizabeth, Mary, Simeon, Anna, the angels, the shepherds, pour forth their exulting praise in canticles sung by the church in all ages. When a boy of twelve years He sits in the temple, the centre of an admiring circle, astonishing them by His understanding and His answers; and the second chapter closes, Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. In the other, before Christ is born He exposes His mother to the danger of repudiation by her husband, from which she is saved only by divine in-

terposition; at His birth Jerusalem is troubled, and Herod seeks to kill the young child; on the plains of Bethlehem, in place of the chorus sweeping through the midnight sky, the wail of mothers for their slaughtered babes is heard; instead of a multitude of the heavenly host, a solitary spectre is seen—Rachel from her tomb looks in vain for her children and bewails their loss; Christ returns from Egypt, and for thirty years His life is covered by a single sentence with which this chapter closes: “He shall be called a Nazarene.”

In this gospel He withdraws from Judea, in consequence of the imprisonment of His forerunner John the Baptist (iv. 12), and begins an itinerant ministry in Galilee. In Luke no such reason is assigned: He returned in the power of the spirit into Galilee (iv. 14). In both gospels great multitudes follow him (Matt. iv. 25); they see the proofs of His power (ix. 8); they are astonished at His doctrine (vii. 28; xxii. 23); they wonder and are amazed (ix. 33; xxii. 23); but Luke adds what is not found in Matthew: He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all; they wondered at the words of grace which proceed out of His mouth (iv. 22); the people gladly received Him, for they were all waiting for Him (viii. 40); they stayed Him that He should not depart from them (iv. 42). Even in the embittered hostility which marked the last days of Christ's intercourse with the Jewish people, Luke tells us that from certain of the Scribes came

commendation of Christ's replies: Master, thou hast well said (xx. 39). Matthew's gospel is the record of the national opposition to Christ and of Christ's withdrawal from that opposition. The word "withdraw" is characteristic of this Evangelist; found once in Mark (iii. 7), and once in John (vi. 15), and not at all in Luke, it occurs ten times in Matthew. At the beginning of our Lord's work in this gospel, we read those sad words in which Christ declares the inveterate rancor of His foes, and the result of their determined pursuit as foreseen by Him: The foxes have holes where they may escape from their pursuers, the birds of the air have shelters where they are safe, but the Son of Man hath no place where He may lay His head; He will be hunted to the death (viii. 20). In this gospel Christ's life begins with withdrawal from His enemies; to escape the murderous rage of Herod He withdraws into Egypt (ii. 14); on His return He withdraws into Galilee for fear of Archelaus (ii. 22). His public ministry commences and continues in the same way: Now when Jesus had heard that John was delivered up, He withdrew into Galilee (iv. 12). The Pharisees follow Him and hold a council against Him how they may destroy Him: But when Jesus knew it He withdrew Himself from thence (xii. 15). John the Baptist is put to death: When Jesus heard of it He withdrew by ship into a desert place apart (xiv. 13). Still pursued by the Pharisees He withdraws from Judea into the borders of Tyre

and Sidon (xv. 21); He returns and evades His pursuers by crossing and recrossing the lake of Gennesaret (xv. 39); until finally, the purpose of His earthly life accomplished, He ascends to Jerusalem to die (xix. 1).

The characteristic of rejection governs the death as well as the life of Christ. Matthew records but one cry on the cross; it is that desolate wail; My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me (xxvii. 46). In another gospel there follow Him to Calvary a great company of people and of women, who bewail and lament Him (Luke xxiii. 27); and when the sad deed is consummated, all the people that came together to that sight smite their breasts and return (xxiii. 48); but in Matthew no penitent thief prays, "Lord, remember me"; no word of sympathy from any human voice is heard; on the contrary those that pass by revile Him (xxvii. 39); and the chief priests mocking Him, with the scribes and elders, cry: He trusted in God, let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him (xxviii. 43). Only in this gospel do the enemies of Christ carry their malice beyond the crucifixion, and set a seal and guard to prevent His resurrection (xxvii. 62, 65).

This gospel necessarily excludes the idea of success. Christ is rejected, and the disciple must be as His master (x. 24, 25). Hence there is a remarkable absence of motive or encouragement founded on what will be accomplished. In Luke, when Peter is called to follow Christ, a miraculous draught of fishes foretells success in

catching men; but this incident is omitted by Matthew (Luke v. 4-10; Matt. iv. 18-20). In the commission to the apostles in the tenth chapter the one thought is, you will share the treatment your Master receives, but your Heavenly Father sees all, knows all, and will at the end reward all; just as Christ's only assurance to His disciples when He sends them to all nations is: Lo, I am with you (xxviii. 20). Of Christ Himself no success in this age is asserted. Matthew has no prediction like that in John: I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me (xii. 32); it is simply stated: This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations and then shall the end come (xxiv. 14). Of the forerunner, Matthew says: The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight (iii. 3); but he does not add what is found in Luke: Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight and the rough ways shall be made smooth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God (iii. 5, 6).

This feature of the rejection of Christ by the nation gives tone to all our Lord's teaching in the gospel. Here only do we find the declaration, Strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it (vii. 14). In Luke the injunction, Strive to enter in, is enforced on the ground that now the gate can be entered and the time comes when it will

be shut (Luke xiii. 24); in Matthew the reason for the exhortation is a truth which finds expression only here: Wide is the gate and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat (vii. 13). Only in this gospel are we told that many are called but few chosen (xxii. 14); that in the closing period of the age the love of the majority shall wax cold (xxiv. 12); that many will claim in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name have cast out demons, and in Thy name done many wondrous works, to whom Christ will say, I never knew you (vii. 22, 23); here only do we read of the tares that are to be gathered out of the wheatfield in the time of harvest and burned (xiii. 30); of the net, that gathered of every kind, which when it was full, they drew to shore, and gathered the good into vessels and cast the bad away (xiii. 47, 48); of the foolish virgins (xxv. 2); of the man without the wedding garment; and of the outer darkness into which the despisers of the gospel shall be cast (xx. 12, 13).

In the trial and condemnation of our Lord as recorded by Matthew, the nature of the Messiahship and the fullness of the national rejection are clearly seen. The trial is mainly that before the Sanhedrin, as Luke is occupied with that before Pilate. The charge relates to His divine Sonship and His alleged purpose to destroy the temple (xxvi. 59, 66); we hear nothing of the social accusation found elsewhere, of perverting the na-

tion and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar (Luke xxiii. 2). Only in this gospel, and here twice, does Pilate formally put the solemn question, Whom will ye that I release unto you, Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ? Twice they decide to take Barabbas, and, Matthew significantly adds, destroy Jesus (xxvii. 17, 22). After the disclaimer of Pilate, we find only in Matthew those fearful words by which the nation assumed the whole guilt of the crime: Then answered all the people, His blood be on us and on our children (xxvii. 25).

This gospel of rejection is necessarily Christ's rejection of the nation. Only here do we read: The kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof (xxi. 43). Here only does Christ, portraying the return of the unclean spirit to his former habitation making the last state of man worse than the first, say, Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation (xii. 45). Here only does He declare that the horrible assertion, He doth not cast out demons but by Beelzebub the prince of the demons (xii. 24), was the exponent and proof of a depravity so thorough and complete, that when God and the devil stood before them they could not tell one from the other—they had lost the power of discriminating between heaven and hell, between infinite compassion and demoniac hate; and that this terrible moral condition of heart and tongue was on the very verge of remediless ruin (xii. 33-37). Here only does he

quote the prophecy of Isaiah: By hearing, ye shall hear and shall not understand; and seeing, ye shall see and not perceive: for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them (xiii. 14, 15). Here only does he say of the religious teachers of the Jews: Every plant that my father hath not planted, shall be rooted up (xv. 13). All the parables spoken in public after the thirteenth chapter—of the two sons (xxi. 28), of the householder (xxi. 33), and of the marriage of the king's son (xxii. 2)—set forth the national sin and destruction. The closing miracle is the blasting of the fig-tree, the emblem of the fate of the nation, covered with green leaves, the promise of fertility, but bearing no fruit (xxi. 19). The last public discourse is an arraignment of the heads of the nation; with burning indignation He portrays their character and history, bids them in words found only in Matthew, Fill ye up the measure of your fathers (xxiii. 32); and with the terrible inquiry, Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell (xxiii. 33)? pronounces their doom, and departs forever from the temple (xxi. 1). Compare all this with the last sentence in Luke's account of the public ministry of Christ: And in the daytime He was teaching in the temple, and at night He went out

and abode in the mount of Olives; and all the people came early in the morning to Him in the temple for to hear Him (xxi. 37, 38).

The refusal of the nation to receive their Messiah results in "a new covenant, a new election, a new legislation, a new community." When the world in former times had rejected God, He raised up a nation of which He should be Head and Lawgiver. When this nation rejects Christ, He calls a people to whom He shall stand in still closer relation as Head and sole Lawgiver. He gathers a small company of disciples who attended Him constantly (iv. 18-22; v. 1; x. 1), and who finally recognize His divine character (xvi. 16). When this is accomplished He is ready for the cross. In His address to the Father, in the seventeenth chapter of John, He says: I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do. I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world. I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me, and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me. As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even also have I sent them into the world. And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one. When they have rightly apprehended His nature and mission, He makes known to them His intention to constitute a church—an ecclesia, a selection of individuals—comprising those persons to whom Christ is

revealed by the Father: I will build My church upon this rock—the divinely imparted knowledge of Christ (xvi. 17–19). This is the nation to which the kingdom of God shall be given, for it will bring forth the fruits thereof (1 Peter ii. 9).

No Evangelist but Matthew mentions the church, and he announces its constitution, membership, duties, discipline and ordinances. The commands to administer and observe the rites of baptism (xxviii. 19) and the communion (xxvi. 26, 27), are given only in this gospel. Here only is found the sacred formula used at the initiating ordinance of the Christian church: In the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (xxviii. 19).

4. The gospel according to Matthew is thus, by its very nature, Official and Organic, having primarily to do with these two nations—that from which the kingdom of God is taken (xxi. 43), and that to which it is given (1 Peter ii. 9); the one outward, carnal, Jewish, the other spiritual, holy, Christian; the one rejected, the other founded and proleptically organized. Christ comes to the nation. He deals, as God dealt throughout the Old Testament, with an organic body acting through lawfully constituted and acknowledged representatives. The parables are all organic or official; the duties inculcated are all organic; the final scene is the judgment of the nations; and the commission at the close of the gospel is the official one: Go ye, therefore, and disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name

of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you (xxviii. 19, 20). The official relation of John the Baptist is constantly noticed, the great stages of Christ's work being preceded by a statement of the position of John (iv. 14; xi. 2; xiv. 12; xvii. 11-13). The denunciations in this gospel are of the national authorities, as elsewhere they are of character and conditions (Matt. xxiii.; Luke vi. 24-26). Here the woes are pronounced against the representatives and guides of the people. No gospel but this tells us that in the last days many false prophets shall arise and shall deceive many (xxiv. 1); none but this warns us against false teachers, ravening wolves in sheeps' clothing (vii. 15), blind guides straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel (xxiii. 24), shutting up the kingdom against men (xxiii. 13).

The impersonal character of Matthew's narratives is one of his most marked characteristics. Of our Lord's unofficial relations to individuals, our gospel makes no mention until the rejection has been consummated by the death on the Cross (xxvii. 56, 57). Before that time there is no account of those personal friendships and affections which appear in Luke so abundantly and in John almost exclusively. Here there is no reference to the family in Bethany (Luke xii. 38; John xii. 2); no loving catalogue of the names of the women who followed with the twelve, and ministered to Him of their substance (Luke viii. 2, 3); no

commendation, as in other gospels, of the poor widow who threw her two mites into the treasury (Mark xii. 41-44; Luke xxi. 1-4). The anointing of Mary is inserted to explain the conduct of the Sanhedrin in seizing Christ at the Passover contrary to their previous intention, but the name of Mary is not given (xxvi. 1-16).

One of the main objects of this gospel is, to show that the great facts of the Christian age have not thwarted the divine purposes, nor compelled the adoption of principles previously unknown. God's dealings with the called are throughout consistent and coherent. Christianity is ideal as well as historic and actual. In the kingdom of heaven the law and the prophets are completed. The uniformity of God's work in the past, the present, and the future, is shown throughout the gospel. The genealogy of our Lord contains the names of four Gentile women, three of them stained by heinous crime, who by faith and grace obtained a place in the royal line, and whose blood flowed in the veins of all the Jewish kings (i. 3, 5, 6). In the first chapter of this gospel, the fact is thus set forth, that God interwove the two great principles of the New Dispensation—grace and faith—into the very warp and woof of the Abrahamic people. By these, strangers and foreigners sought and secured a place in the household. In the second chapter, The Magi, the Gentiles, recognize and honor Christ (ii. 11), while the rulers and theocratic guides of the nation pass Him by in con-

tempt. A refuge is provided in Egypt from Jewish malevolence (ii. 14, 15). It is a Roman centurion whose faith was such as he had not found in Israel (viii. 10). It is one of the accursed race of the Canaanites who draws from our Lord the exclamation: "O, woman, great is thy faith" (xv. 28). It is the mixed multitudes fed by Christ—the four thousand—who glorify the God of Israel (xv. 31). It is Pilate's Gentile wife who sends the warning: Have thou nothing to do with that just man (xxvii. 14); and the only recognition of Christ's innocence by those who stand around the cross in this gospel, is on the part of the Roman guards (xxvii. 54).

Thus does this gospel which has in its first sentence the call of Abraham, and in its last the end of the age, set forth the continuity of God's dealings and the accomplishment of His designs. The phrases "that it might be fulfilled" and "to the end of the age" are among its prominent and constantly recurring peculiarities. The references to the Old Testament and the verbal citations from it in Matthew, far exceed in number those found in any other Evangelist; but, with a single exception, they are not such as would be employed to prove to an unbeliever, by the fulfillment of prophecy, the Messiahship of Jesus. Many commentators deny that in the great majority of these predictions there is any direct reference to the Messiah. They are addressed to believers in Christ; they vindicate by

reference to Old Testament facts and principles. His lowly condition, His apparent powerlessness, His reception by inferior and despised classes. The one exception is the prophecy of Micah cited by the Sanhedrin in answer to Herod's inquiry as to the birthplace of Christ. This is given by Matthew not to prove the Messiahship, but to condemn the Sanhedrin out of their own mouth (ii. 4-6); they pointed the Gentiles to a Christ whom they themselves neglected, and threw the clear light of Scripture on the path in which they refused to walk. The uniform character of the other quotations will be obvious as you recall them: Out of Egypt have I called My Son (ii. 15); He shall be called a Nazarene (ii. 23); The people which sat in darkness saw great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up (iv. 15); He shall not strive nor cry, neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets: A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench, till He send forth judgment unto victory (xii. 19, 20); For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them (xiii. 15); I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world (xiii. 35); Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee,

meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass (xxi. 5); Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise (xxi. 16); The stone which the builders rejected the same is become the head of the corner (xxi. 42).

God's word does not return unto Him void. His promises have a far wider, better, more glorious fulfillment than ever man imagined. The first book of the Old Testament records the calling out of a nation from which the Messiah should come; this first book of the New Testament records the calling out of a nation in which the Messiah shall dwell. The tabernacle and temple are destroyed, but the Divine Presence which they promised, and represented in shadow, is here in blessed reality: Lo, I am with you alway, unto the end of the age. On the Galilean mountain are uttered the words of which the voice out of heaven, which John heard in the isle of Patmos (Rev. xxi. 3), is only the echo: Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they will be His people and God Himself will be with them and be their God. There is in our gospel no account of the ascension—that belongs to another point of view. Here the final and abiding thought, as the church commences her world-wide mission, is the fulfillment of the Old Testament promise, the name with which this gospel begins and ends—Jesus, Immanuel, God with us.

The relation of the gospel according to Mat-

thew to the succeeding evangelists deserves a word.

The great necessities of man's spiritual nature are righteousness, sanctification, redemption, life. This is the order of the gospels. Matthew is the gospel of righteousness, the supreme attribute in the nature of God. The exposition, explanation, and enforcement of the nature, claims and relations of righteousness are the constant themes of our Lord's ministry in this gospel, and His public teaching here ends with the picture of the righteous judge receiving the righteous into everlasting habitations.

In Mark Christ is made unto us sanctification. The gospel is occupied exclusively with service, unceasing, fervent, occupying the whole being. It closes as it begins with the Lord working. Mark xvi. 30.

Luke is clearly the gospel of redemption. In it God visits and redeems His people, remembering His holy covenant, that His people, delivered from their enemies, may serve Him without fear all the days of their life. Redemption by grace and faith is the keynote of the gospel, while the songs of the redeemed in Luke's gospel have been echoed by the church in all ages. The gospel closes with the disciples continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Luke xxiv. 53.

There is no need of words to show that John is the gospel of life. This culmination and crown of God's dealings is so constantly presented by the evangelist and the Lord Himself,

that the statement need only be heard to command assent. I am come, says Christ, that they may have life and that they may have it more abundantly. John x. 10.

The Gospel of Matthew—An Exposition

THE GENEALOGY AND BIRTH OF CHRIST

MATTHEW begins his history of the Jewish king with a genealogy showing his national and royal descent; he is David's son, Abraham's son, heir of the promise and of the throne. The genealogy is given in three stages, representing the great epochs in God's preparation of the nation for their coming Messiah;—from Abraham to David, from David to the Babylonian Captivity, from the Captivity to Christ. The thrice repeated "fourteen" is not an arithmetical but a symbolical number, as are all numbers in the Bible when they are employed to describe God's dealings with His people. Of this, the term "the twelve tribes" in the New Testament is a familiar instance. In such cases the number given is not intended as a definite statement, but indicates character, purpose or relation. The one hundred and forty-four thousand in Revelation xiv. 3 is not the exact total of those who have learned the new song but the twelve times twelve thousand, the completed host of the redeemed from among men, who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These three fourteens indicate what God did in the training, discipline and preparation of the nation for the advent of the Messiah at the beginning of the nation, at the height of its pros-

perity, at its decadence; the manifestation and working of the priestly, kingly, prophetic character. To one who will study them they reveal some of the methods used to bring about that fullness of time when He should send forth His son, born of woman (Gal. iv. 4). A part of this preparation was to convince men of the absolute need of the personal presence of a Redeemer; a part to prepare the nation and the world for His coming and the spread of the gospel. Into the particulars involved in this genealogy we cannot now enter; suffice it to say, that at its close the condition of the Jewish nation was such as to cause all true Israelites to send forth one constant and earnest cry for the redemption of the promised land and the promised people. The civil and religious condition is told in Luke iii. 1; a heathen emperor from afar sways the sceptre of absolute dominion over the holy land, a land which should have no ruler but God; an Edomite sits on the throne in Jerusalem; the country which should be one, indissoluble and undivided, is split into fragments under foreign satraps frequently at variance with one another. The religious condition is told in the double priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, while the character of those who sit in Moses' seat and wield his authority is portrayed in those fearful delineations of their course and doom pronounced in our gospel by the lips of the Lord Jesus. If there is one who can save his people from their sins, it is time for him to come.

CHAP. II.]

In a few words, the advent, nature, office, work and relation of the Saviour are declared. He is of divine and human origin, begotten by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary. His work is the salvation of His people, and His relation to them is declared by His name—Immanuel, God with us. The close of the first chapter indicates the forward step of the gospels. In the Old Testament God is for His people; in the gospels He is with His people; in the Epistles He is in His people. These three—God for us, God with us, God in us—are the method and end of the divine dealing; holiness eternal in the heavens, incarnate on the earth, embodied in the saints.

THE INFANCY OF JESUS

IN this gospel there are three presentations of the Messiah to the nation. The first is that of the infant king, to whose birth the
Chap. ii. attention of the civil and religious rulers is called by the Magi. In the second the approaching advent of the king and kingdom is proclaimed by the appointed herald; Christ presents Himself to the people in the thickly settled districts of Galilee of the Gentiles, remote from Jerusalem. The scene of the third is in Jerusalem itself, into which city Christ rides in royal state, assumes the title and prerogatives of the Messiah, receives the acclamations of the multitude, confronts the rulers, and by word and work demands the recognition of His office.

The gospel of Matthew covers, as does no other book, the whole Christian age. In this second chapter the characteristics of this age are foreshadowed. It is to be an age in which the kingdom of God, taken from the Jews shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. David, Isaiah and Haggai exultingly predict that to Him the gold of Sheba, the wealth of the Gentiles, all the desirable things of the nations shall be brought. The history of Christianity is the record of the fulfillment of these prophecies. By the gifts and prayers and labors of Gentiles the coming of the kingdom of God has been hastened and more and more as the consummation approaches shall the purpose and plan of God in this respect be seen.

Most appropriate is it therefore that in this gospel the birth of Christ shall be announced to the Jews by Gentile Magi; that the hatred of Herod and the contempt of the Sanhedrin shall not cause the infant Messiah to fail of royal and priestly gifts; gold and frankincense and myrrh. The attempt of Herod to cause the death of Christ is the opening chapter of that unrelenting enmity which culminates in the death on the cross; while the Magi are the first of a long series of those who bring their choicest gifts to a Saviour whom the world does not honor. All of God's sons are brought out of Egypt, out of the land of bondage and darkness. The babes of Bethlehem begin that sorrowful procession which may fitly have for its banner the words of

CHAP. III.]

Christ "I came not to send peace but a sword." No religion has brought such suffering on the innocent as Christianity, no persecutions known to history are so bitter and cruel as those caused by the presence of Christ. Bethlehem is the birthplace not only of Jesus, but of the holy army of martyrs. The chapter closes with Christ in His permanent relation in this age, a Nazarene, despised and rejected by men. Around Christ's cradle cluster all the characteristics of the world's treatment of the coming Christianity, and this chapter is the microcosm of Christ's work, of its accompaniments and results from the point of view of Matthew's gospel.

THE FORERUNNER

THE second presentation is announced by John the Baptist, proclaiming in the wilderness of Judea, the approach of the king and
Chap. iii. of the kingdom. The reception of the herald will determine the reception of the king. The relation of John the Baptist to Christ is shown by the nature of the respective work of each, by the connection of the crises of John's life with the great epochs of Christ's ministry, and by the reply always made by our Lord when His official foes demand the credentials of His Messiahship. The imprisonment of John and the consequent enforced retirement from his work is given as the reason for Christ's withdrawal into Galilee; the death of John at the hands of Herod is coincident with

the change in our Lord's miracles and teaching; while the uniform reply of Christ to the demand for His authority is, "The baptism of John, was it from heaven or of men?" The divineness of the Baptist's ministry must be recognized before Christ's work can be understood. Repentance must precede faith. The object of God in the Old Dispensation was to show mercy, but mercy has no meaning to those who have no consciousness of guilt. Our Lord's reference to John the Baptist in His controversies is not for the sake of confounding His accusers. Repentance must precede faith, for the Saviour cannot be accepted unless there be the conviction of the need of a Saviour.

The divinely appointed method of profession of allegiance to the coming king is by submission to the ordinance of baptism which is a declaration of a personal acceptance of a personal Saviour, a death to the old life and an entrance on a new. No one can claim admission to the kingdom on the ground of natural birth, of fleshly relation, or descent from Abraham. John declares that the initiatory rite of the New Dispensation will be administered only on production of proof, satisfactory to the administrator, that there has been a personal compliance with the command to repent. The requirement to bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance, does not mean, In future live in accordance with your profession, but, Produce, here and now, evidence that you have repented. "And all the people, when they

CHAP. III.]

heard it, and the publicans, justified God, having been baptized with John's baptism; but the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the counsel of God with regard to themselves not being baptized by Him" (Luke vii. 29, 30).

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

While the herald is discharging his office, Jesus appears and requests baptism. Why is Jesus baptized? Why is His baptism accompanied by such wonderful portents and tokens of the divine approval? It is sometimes said that Jesus was baptized as an act of obedience to the command of God. This cannot be. The whole life of Jesus had been marked by continual obedience to His Father. Never had there been a waking hour which was not in accordance with the Father's will. What is there about this act which calls forth this marvellous expression of heaven's interest, and heaven's delight? Why does the Holy Spirit descend and abide on Christ?

The answer to these questions is found in the purpose of our Lord's baptism. It is Christ's formal entrance on His official work. In this rite He devotes Himself to the accomplishment of salvation by death, burial and resurrection. This sacrifice and consecration bring from the opened heavens the words, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." So Christ says, "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I may take it again" (John x. 17).

Three things are necessary for the work on which Christ now enters—revelation, inspiration, and approval. These He has; the heavens are opened to Him; the Spirit abides on Him; the consciousness of the divine delight in the work is His evermore. These three things, in our measure we want.

THE TEMPTATION

IMMEDIATELY after His formal assumption of the Messianic office Christ is led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

Chap. iv. Why does such a temptation follow
1-16. His baptism, and what place does it hold in the work of salvation?

It is sometimes said that our Lord passed through this experience that He might be able to sympathize with those of His followers who are tempted. But this cannot be; Jesus had lived thirty years exposed to all the temptations of an ordinary human life. He does not now need to learn what temptation is. The history of Christ after His baptism is a history, not of preparation for His work, but of the work itself. Whatever preparation there is in and by the work is objective, not subjective, official, not internal.

We have already said that the Bible is a history of the contest between Christ and Satan, for man and his dwelling place, predicted in the third chapter of Genesis. The temptation recorded in the fourth chapter of Matthew is the opening battle in this great conflict. Christ Himself tells us

CHAP. IV. 1-16.]

that He must first bind the strong man before he can make a spoil of his goods. Face to face Christ meets the great adversary and overcomes him. Accordingly all these temptations are Messianic temptations. They are addressed to rightful desires and instincts; they are emphatically temptations to *sin*, which in its essence is the attempt to satisfy a right desire in a wrong way.

Christ sustains a threefold relation; He is Son of Man, Son of God, and the Messiah. Each of these in its turn is made the ground of attack.

First, Christ is tempted as the Son of Man. The temptation is addressed to the instinct of hunger—the first, the most innocent, the most necessary of human desires. Without it, life would be impossible, and the purpose of life would be unattained. Christ is tempted to satisfy His hunger in a way that God has not appointed. God has ordained that men cannot live on stones. The history of the world is the history of human effort to turn stones into bread. It was the first temptation presented to man, and the first by which man was overcome. Our first parents had the power of eating the forbidden fruit and yielded to the temptation to gratify their desires; Christ is urged to save His life and to satisfy His hunger by His miraculous power. His reply is, I am a man; I am subject to all the laws and limitations which belong to the condition into which I have come. I will not step off the platform of humanity and unhumanize myself. Life

is no life if it is not sustained and guided by the word of God.

If Christ had yielded to this temptation He would have made redemption impossible. Salvation is accomplished by Christ bearing our sins and taking our infirmities. Had He begun His career delivering Himself from suffering, by miraculous power, the cross with its agony could never have been. If He could thus escape suffering in the wilderness, so could He on Calvary. Satan would undo the incarnation, and thus prevent Christ's saving His brethren, like whom in all things it was necessary He should be (Heb. ii. 17).

In the second temptation the ground is changed. Our Lord is taken to the holy city, to the temple, placed on the pinnacle of the temple, and a Scriptural promise is the ground of appeal. It is the temptation to Christ as the Son of God; the temptation in holy things. This temple temptation is the subtlest and most dangerous of all. The first temptation endeavored to destroy Christ's humanity; this to destroy Christ's divine sonship. He is urged to act on His own impulses, not to be dependent on God's directions but to do something which will put the truth of God's words to the test. This is the temptation to Christians to measure the love of God to them by their freedom from temporal suffering. They say, can God love me and yet allow me to be the recipient of so much pain, to be the victim of such calamities? It is the temptation to suppose that because we are children of God He must keep us from those

CHAP. IV. 1-16.]

ills which are the common lot of man; the temptation to regard ourselves as free from the obligation to obey the ordinary laws of gravity. How often men fall from the height of the temple! Men say these persons were hypocrites; their fall shows it. No, they were not hypocrites; they did live in the holy city, they knew what it was to be on the pinnacle of the temple, with its far-reaching view and clear atmosphere. They thought that this position precluded all danger, and so they fell. "I have committed it all to Jesus," said a minister, "and He will not suffer me to make a mistake." Ah, my brother, you are in the most dangerous position in the world. A man who supposes that he holds such a relation to God that he may cast himself down with impunity is in awful peril. Rather let him say,

"Hold thou my way, O God,
Myself I cannot guide;
Nor dare I trust my erring steps,
One moment from Thy side."

The third temptation is presented to Christ as the Messiah. He has come to recover this world. The devil offers to surrender it on one condition—that Christ adopts Satan's methods. This will spare the Messiah the pain of Calvary, the humiliation of rejection, the long delay incident to the course which God has proscribed; it will give immediate possession without cost or suffering.

This is the temptation which has slain the church. She listened to the siren song which offered her the world, if she would adopt worldly methods. The offer was accepted, and the delivery was made; the church ascended the throne of the Cæsars and sung the song of triumph. She was no longer the bride waiting the return of her absent husband; she sat as a queen and saw no sorrow. Her song was "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord Jesus Christ, a king and a priest is on the throne; the prophecies are accomplished, and the earth sings, Alleluia." We read precisely this on the pages of Eusebius and the old historians.

So now the church is continually tempted to gain power over men by worldly means. We are bidden to listen to the demands of the world, to shape Christianity in accordance with the ideas of those who are not members of the church, to comply with the cry of those who surrounded the dying Lord, "Come down from the cross, and we will believe Thee."

These three temptations are to the man, to the Christian, to the church. They include all the temptations which come to the Christian—temptations to his natural instincts, temptations to his spiritual desires, temptations to his efforts to bring the world to Christ. The wilderness, the temple, the mountain; solitude, sanctity, society; these three. In all, the captain of our salvation triumphed and triumphed for us, and Satan left Him for a season.

THE ENTRANCE ON THE GALILEAN MINISTRY

OUR Lord began His official work by presenting Himself as the Messiah to the official representatives of the nation at the religious centre—the Temple, in the religious metropolis, Jerusalem—during the national feasts, at which the attendance of all the male citizens of the nation was required. The history of this portion of Christ's life is found in the gospel according to John. The scene of Christ's ministry in Matthew and Mark, with the exception of the last week in our Lord's life, is in Galilee; in Luke, in Galilee, Samaria and Perea; John confines himself mainly to Jerusalem. The synoptics make no mention of the opening ministry in Jerusalem but begin with the Galilean ministry. The reason for this is found in the different objects of the synoptics and John.

The imprisonment of John the Baptist closes His ministry. The fate of the herald foreshadows the fate of the Messiah, the rejection of the one being the rejection of the other. With the imprisonment of John, Christ changes the place and the mode of His work. He withdraws from the metropolis, and in the remoter regions of the country pursues a course which, so far as possible, shall not attract public attention. He calls to Him twelve disciples who are to be His constant companions, to listen to His teachings, to be associated with Him in the most intimate

relations, that in this way they may know Him, may comprehend His purposes and understand His methods, so that when He leaves the world they shall take up His work, reveal Him to others, and continue the revelation to the end of the age. These twelve constitute the nucleus of an ecclesia, a selection, a church, which is to be His body, whose members are to sustain the relation to Him which He sustains to the Father. The full report of the wonderful work wrought in Galilee may be found in the seventeenth chapter of the gospel according to John, the greatest revelation of God's designs and method contained in the New Testament. There is no chapter in the New Testament which deserves or will repay profounder study than this.

The Galilean ministry is hence the type of the ministry of the church in this dispensation. Let us study its characteristics as here portrayed.

(1) It is a ministry to those who are in darkness. The people sitting in darkness see a great light, and to those sitting in the region and the shadow of death light arises. To those who are in the darkness of sin we are to bring Christ, the light of life. We are sent not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

(2) It is a ministry of preparation for a coming kingdom. As ye go, say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. The church is now in its pupilage; it is kept here in this world, exposed to trials and temptation, subject to continual instruction, that it may become complete

CHAP. IV. 12-25.]

and mature, its members perfect in Christ Jesus, filled with all the fullness of God, built up a holy temple, fitted for the work which is to be entrusted to the saints.

(3) It is a personal ministry. Christ walks by the sea of Galilee and calls, not now the nation as in the Jerusalem ministry, but individuals. Preëminently is the church a company of individuals, each one personally called by the Saviour, each one personally accepting the Lord Jesus as his Saviour. In Christianity there must always be a personal acceptance of a personal Saviour by a personal sinner.

(4) It is a teaching ministry. And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom. All holiness is the fruit of truth. Eternal life cannot be communicated nor sustained by external means. Christians are born again by the word of truth, and they must grow by the pure milk of the word. This is all that gives importance to a creed. No belief is of any worth only as it is the stepping-stone to holiness. Right views of Christ are important because they are essential to growth in grace. The ministry which professes to impart religious life by external touch is not the Galilean ministry. Christians are regenerated and sanctified by the truth.

(5) It is a successful ministry. Our Lord healed all who were brought to Him of whatever disease they had. Demoniacs, lunatics, paralytics—there was no form of death which He could

54 The Kingdom of Heaven Portrayed

[CHAP. V.]

not dispossess. It is important to remember what is meant by success. Christ did not sweep all sickness from the land of Judea. He did not make disease impossible. Nay, there were places where He did not many mighty works because of their unbelief. Christianity does not pretend to accomplish everything which the world says it ought; it does not profess to deliver every one from the ills under which he groans; it does not promise that state of things which the world craves and which it would account success. Its offers are explicit and it fulfills all its promises; Christ saves from sin on one condition, submission to Him; He does not save any man or any company of men if they do not accept Him.

The purpose and object of Christ's teaching and work in Galilee was to found the church. The features of the Galilean ministry are the features of the ministry of the church; it is to those in darkness, preparatory, personal, teaching, successful.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN PORTRAYED

THE steps necessary to entrance on His official work having been taken, our Lord in this gospel begins His ministry by a public, formal, and official statement of the nature, the laws, and the subjects of the kingdom which He comes to establish. These last are presented in their character, influence, conduct, and destiny. The law of the kingdom is righteousness. This is discussed in its relation to law, to motive, to this world, to other subjects of the kingdom and is

summed up in what is commonly called the golden rule, which again is declared to be the end of the law and prophets. At the beginning of His career, Christ draws the picture of the person who is to be the result of His work. This is the ideal man whom the Saviour is to make actual by saving him from sin.

(1) The character is sketched in seven beatitudes. The first is the consciousness of utter spiritual poverty. The man stands

Chap. v. before God in a state of absolute destitution, a beggar, with no power to alter his condition or to make himself better. This position is the indispensable condition of entrance to the kingdom. While it is the indispensable condition, it is the only condition. Nothing else is required. One may be rich or poor, learned or ignorant, moral or immoral, white or black, if before God he confesses himself an absolute pauper, without goodness and without the means of obtaining any, if he is willing to take God's grace as a free gift, bestowed by undeserved and unmerited mercy, he enters the kingdom. This is the one, sole condition of admission, but it is within the reach of every one. No man on earth, be he who or what he will, is excluded.

(2) This moral pauperism, the result of sin, is no matter of indifference to the seeker. The presence of sin as well as its remembrance is a matter of profound grief to him. He recognizes its character and its deplorable results and mourns

because of his guilt and his present condition. Sin to him is not a light thing; there is no sorrow like the sorrow caused by the consciousness of sin. It pervades the whole character, and as long as sin is found in him or in others, the man is a mourner.

(3) God is fitting this man for a place in His kingdom. In order to do this two things are necessary. He must have his life conformed to the divine character by doing what God requires, and he must be moulded into divine life and loveliness by the chiselling of the divine hand. Obedience and discipline are the two factors in fitting him for his new destiny. The meek are to inherit the earth; hence they obey God's commandments without asking why; they submit to God's discipline without complaint or resistance. They know the active and the passive side of this grace of meekness, rejoicing in the coöperation of the human and divine in the wonderful work which the king has taken in hand. They do not inquire, "What good will obedience do me?" Nor do they resist God's providences; they only ask, "What will the Lord have me to do?" And when afflictive providences come, their cry is, It is the Lord, let Him do what seems good in His sight.

(4) This man's whole being is engaged in the pursuit of righteousness. Ordinarily we hunger for food and we thirst for drink. But for righteousness every desire and thought of the soul is engaged; this man shall be filled; righteousness satisfies every want and instinct of the human heart.

(5) We come now to the divine side, for all Matthew's sevens are divided into four and three, the human and the divine. Filled with righteousness, the man is now prepared to exercise the divinest prerogative of sovereignty—mercy—the special prerogative of a king. In its rightful exercise, it must rest on righteousness. The exercise of mercy, except by righteousness, is wrong. It cannot be mercy in its full, clear, shining character, if there be not the fullest conception of righteousness accompanying the act. Otherwise it is moral indifference or sentimentalism.

(6) Happy the pure in heart, for they shall see God. The metaphor is taken from the custom of Oriental monarchs, who dwell in seclusion and hold intercourse with their subjects only by means of a vizier or trusted officer admitted to the royal presence. "Pure" among us is ordinarily restricted to a single virtue. In the Scripture it has its old sense, "without alloy." The pure in heart is the man who has but one intention, who has no double purpose, no side aim, but has an eye single to the service and will of his master. This man is admitted to the presence of God; day and night he is consciously in His presence; he lives but for this one end, to please God. In a world which is full of God, where few men see Him, the pure in heart behold Him everywhere and in all things. Nature, history and providence, as well as the Bible, are to such manifestations of God.

58 The Kingdom of Heaven Portrayed

[CHAP. V.]

(7) Happy the peacemakers; for they shall be called the sons of God. "To be called" in the New Testament means shall be, and shall be recognized as being. God's highest work is to make peace; peace between God and man; peace between man and man. Because He is the God of peace He brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ; and those who engage in this work of making peace are united to Him in the closest relationship. So on this seven-runged ladder the poor beggar, destitute and helpless, mounts until he becomes a member of the divine family. Destitute, sorrowing, meek, hungry, he is forgiven, a trusted official, a son. Grace stands at the foot of the ladder, mercy is in the middle, peace at its head; so the benediction of the beloved disciple sums up these beatitudes: "Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love, be with you."

It will be seen that all these beatitudes describe permanent characters or states, and that they are all within the reach of every man.

What is the relation of this kingdom to the world and to the Mosaic dispensation? That the world will resent and oppose the teaching of the beatitudes and the character they present is inevitable. The graces which are the tokens and the glory of Christianity are despised by the world. It has for them only contempt and hatred; blessed are those whom the world persecutes.

But for all that, Christians are the enlightening

The Righteousness of the Kingdom 59

CHAP. V.]

and preserving power. Reason is not the light of the world; the Bible is not; embodied holiness, holiness incarnated in the daily life is the only manifestation that can give the knowledge of the truth. The church is the light of the earth and the salt of the world.

This kingdom of the heavens is what was aimed at by the law and the prophets. Its establishment is not their destruction, but their completion and fulfillment. It will bring into being a righteousness far superior to those who regard their method of keeping the law as the highest expression of the divine character.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE KINGDOM

HAVING shown the character, influence and relations of the subjects of the new kingdom, our Lord states the nature of the righteousness of the kingdom and its various manifestations and relations. What is the law by which the new man is to regulate his conduct?

Necessarily life is the first thing to be considered. Our first duty to ourselves and others is to conserve and sustain life. The Mosaic code provides for this in its first command in this portion of the law, Thou shalt do no murder. This is not the law of the kingdom. The new man must refrain from every variance with his brother's life in the fullest sense of that term, and if such variance exists or is brought to his knowledge it must be removed even before the performance of religious duties.

60 The Righteousness of the Kingdom

[CHAP. V.]

Next is organized life. The family is the unit of society. Without civil organization life cannot perform its functions; in the family is not only the foundation and bond of organized society, but every duty we owe God and the state must first be practiced in the family. In the kingdom of heaven every thought which disturbs the sacredness of this institution is forbidden. No sin so destroys society and at the same time the moral character of the individual as the sin against the relation of the sexes.

Speech is man's highest endowment, the truest exponent of character and the means of the greatest influence for good or evil. In the kingdom, speech is to utter truth and the truth only.

In this present age, we shall often be brought in contact with those who do not recognize the laws of righteousness. How shall we conduct ourselves toward the man who refuses to deal justly with us? We are not to resist by violence the wrongdoer. The motive of all our actions toward others should be their good, and they cannot be made good by physical force.

To crown all and explain all, we are to be under the dominion of a love which embraces all men, and which necessitates the manifestation of that love by forgiveness, by seeking their good and doing it whenever we have power. Our model in all things is God Himself.

It will be seen that our Lord in this Sermon on the Mount does not repeal the Mosaic code. That remains as binding and as obligatory as ever.

The Righteousness of the Kingdom 61

CHAP. V.]

Murder is still unlawful. The code of the civil state stands now as heretofore for those who are not the subjects of the kingdom. Neither is the sermon intended as a rectification of the wrong ideas of the Jews with regard to the old law. Christ spends no time in this way. He is laying down the moral principles which apply to those only who are His subjects. This discourse is a statement of principles, not a collection of rules. Obedience to the rules will often violate the principle. In the discussion on fasting, for example, Christ says: "When thou fastest anoint thy head and wash thy face," because this was the method in Christ's time of carrying out His injunction so to fast as not to appear to men to be fasting. But he who in our age and country obeys this rule violates the principle of which the rule was the manifestation. These precepts "are positively mischievous to those who are trying to obey them as rules, instead of using them freely as aids to the apprehension of great ethical and spiritual laws." The man of the kingdom is not to be the child of Judaism governed by specific precepts, but to have as his rule of conduct that ideal of perfection which is found in God Himself. One essential part of the growth of the Christian in grace and knowledge is this application of principles in the determination of questions of practical conduct which continually arise. The rule, "Resist not the evil man; whosoever shall impress thee to go one mile go with him two," is not the rule by which John Hampden governed

his conduct in his resistance to the unlawful imposition of ship money. The payment of that tax was nothing to him, but it meant everything to thousands of his fellow-subjects, and the great law of love which determines and decides the conduct, compelled him to take the attitude of resistance so as to save them from oppression and suffering. When love compels us to resist, we are to resist.

The contrast between the law of civil society and that of the kingdom is clearly seen. The one has to do primarily with actions, the other with the heart; the one aims at conduct, the other at character. The one deals with precepts, the other with principles. The one derives its motive from the result of the conduct, the other has God as its model and spring. The one deals with penalties, the other with rewards; the penalties are temporal, the rewards spiritual. The end of the one is the protection of man's life, property and rights; of the other the creation of a perfect character in righteousness. The Mosaic commonwealth was the perfection of civil society; the kingdom of heaven is the perfection of man.

THE MOTIVE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

MORAL philosophers tell us that the motive of an act largely determines its moral quality.

What is to be the motive of the
Chap. vi. righteousness of the kingdom? This
is discussed by Christ under the three
divisions of religious service, that which relates

to our neighbor—almsgiving; that which relates to God—prayer; that which relates to ourselves—fasting, as the typical example of abstinence from whatever hinders growth in the divine life.

In all these, God is to be the sole thought. Self in all its forms is to be left out of view. Here again, as in the former section, we are given principles, not rules. All benevolence is not to be hidden from the knowledge of others. Whenever we can so let our light shine before men that they may glorify our Father in heaven, we are to obey that injunction of Christ. We are not forbidden to pray in public, if by leading in a prayer meeting or in the family, or in the pulpit we can advance the cause of Christ. We are not forbidden to let it be known that we are fasting, if in proper circumstances those with whom we are united think that the times demand approach to God by His people in this manner. What is forbidden is the performance of any religious act for our glory or advantage instead of having before us solely the glory of God.

THE CLAIMS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

UNTIL the kingdom comes in its fullness, we are to remain in this world, subject to its cares, exposed to its temptations, surrounded by its atmosphere. What is to be our relative relation to this world and to that to which we belong?

We are to lay up our treasure in heaven, not

64 The Judgment of Righteousness

[CHAP. VI.]

on earth. This will prevent the occupation of the heart by this world, the darkening of the moral sense, the enslavement of the will. Anxiety for the things of this life is unnecessary and profitless. God knows, God loves. God is able to provide all; trust Him. Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness and all shall be added to you.

THE JUDGMENT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

THEN comes the crown and capsheaf of all. The man who would be perfect will govern his life strictly by his conception of **Chap. vii.** God's requirements, but he will refrain from condemning his fellow-servants who do not adopt his standard and methods. He knows he has not that omniscience and that perfect understanding of righteousness which are necessary for just judgment. So he does that most difficult of all things—he judges himself rigidly, but refrains from judging others. Many good men carry with them a pocket judgment-seat, and whenever the course or actions of a fellow-Christian are mentioned, they mount the seat and pronounce judgment. No man can do this without becoming blind to his own faults, the intensity of his gaze on his neighbor preventing the scrutiny of his own actions. But if God puts you in a place where it is necessary for you to decide the question of moral character, do not be indifferent to moral distinctions. If He makes you the custodian

or guardian of holy things, do not give them to the dogs. If church ordinances are committed to your administration, do not suffer them to be defiled. And if you ask how you are to walk on this narrow line, how you are to refrain from judging without being insensible to moral discrimination, ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. God deals with us as we do with our children. We teach them first to ask for that which we intend to give them. "Say please," and we should be ashamed of ourselves if we did not give when "please" had been said. But there comes a time when the good is not obtained at once by simple asking; we must seek if we are to find. Then there is a good whose place we know, but a shut door bars our entrance; knock, and it shall be opened. Ask, seek, knock; the trained child of God is led in these three steps in their order.

The discourse closes with three directions. If these are followed, everything in the sermon will be secured and every peril escaped. First, be sure that you enter into life; second, be sure that you be not misled by erroneous teaching; buy the truth, and sell it not; third, see to it that you are not content with profession without practice. Enter the kingdom at every cost; reject carefully every error and embrace every truth; transmute every truth into life. There is no requisite to a perfect life which is not in these concluding directions. Our Lord afterward puts

all these in their order in a single sentence—the ten words of the gospel—I am the way and the truth and the life.

THE MIRACLES OF THE KINGDOM

“BEAUTIFUL! Can he do it?” was the exclamation of an intelligent heathen, after hearing a Christian missionary describe a
Chap. viii. Christian man. The inquiry was pertinent and all-important. The hearers of Christ listened with admiration and delight to the Sermon on the Mount, as it unfolded that perfectly righteous character which man and the earth so much need. Can Christ produce this character? In the ten miracles recorded in the eighth and ninth chapters of the gospel according to Matthew the question is answered.

A study of New Testament miracles will show their nature and design—what they are, and why they are wrought. Such an examination evinces that the gospel miracles are not, as is often supposed, displays of supernatural power intended to prove Christ’s commission. Had He wrought the miracles in physical nature for which the Jews continually clamored and which Christ persistently refused, He would have shown them no credentials of a divine commission, least of all would such miracles have given the Jews any reason to believe in His ability to deliver from sin. The possession of physical power, though it be almighty, gives no indication of the moral

character of the miracle worker. Physical might may compel outward compliance, but I should despise myself if I gave it the homage of my heart. The miracles of Christ all run between clearly defined lines; they are all miracles of salvation; they prove that He is a Saviour by showing that He can do that which He offers to do.

There are three results of sin which must be removed if the salvation of man is secured. Sin has excluded the sinner from the service of God, from fellowship with God, and it ends in death. The first eight miracles recorded in the two chapters under review deal with these manifestations and effects of sin in their order.

SANCTIFICATION, REDEMPTION, LIFE

In the Jewish ritual, leprosy was the symbol of sin. The victim of the disease was constitutionally and permanently unclean, prohibited from association with the people of God, from entering the tabernacle or temple, from engaging in public worship, from presenting any sacrifice or offering, and is doomed to death. An unclean leper is the first person to accost our Lord as He descends from the mountain, with the challenge of faith—Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst cleanse me. The answer is prompt and decisive; I will; be cleansed. The meaning and purpose of the miracle are shown in the accompanying words, See thou say nothing to any one, but go, show thyself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses

directed, and be restored to a place among the servants of God.

But after one is enrolled among God's servants, sin disqualifies for service. The paralysis of sin affects all the powers, and the helpless sufferer is grievously tormented. Again faith manifests its power and with a word the paralysis departs.

The fever of sin runs riot in the veins. Christ enters the house of Peter, touches the hand of the patient; she arises and ministers to Him.

Appropriately now are announced the principles of service. The offer of service could not be better expressed than in the words afterward used by the Holy Spirit as descriptive of those who stand nearest the throne (Rev. xiv. 4): Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou mayest go. The answer of Christ gives for the first time in this gospel the intimation of the offering which He is to make of Himself in which all His servants must be identified with Him. Do you know where I am going? I am going to My death. Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have haunts where they may escape their pursuers, but the Son of Man has no place where He may hide Himself from His foes; He must die. The first principle of service is that for Christ the life must be given up. The second principle is clearly brought out by the request: Permit me first to go and bury my father—the highest possible Oriental duty. The answer is that Christ's claims are paramount to every earthly obligation.

If we become God's servants, He will break the

yoke of all other masters. Always will the time come, if we are faithful, when He will say: I call you no longer servants, but friends. Sin has destroyed the fellowship of God and man; the renewal of that fellowship is man's highest privilege; it is that which is nearest to God's heart, and it must be included in Christ's work. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God must end and be crowned in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. The three miracles of service are followed by three of fellowship.

Man was made in the image of God and was crowned monarch of all nature. When he fell he was discrowned and brought under the dominion of his former servants, the winds and the waters holding him in terror and sweeping him to destruction. Christ rebuked—mark the word—the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.

There is a worse thralldom than that of physical nature; the sinner is in subjection to the evil one, and the ruin wrought by evil spirits is fearful; Christ casts out the demons and the possessed are clothed and in their right minds.

The crowning bondage is that of sin. Can sin be forgiven? Can it be so removed that the remembrance shall not interpose between God and man, so swept away that there is no barrier to the closest fellowship? Christ's miracles answer the question; the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sin; the paralytic goes to his home with all his powers restored.

In every age and country, eating together is a sign and condition of social fellowship. The Saviour and the sinners recline at the same table. The Pharisees behold this unprecedented act with astonishment; Christ vindicates Himself by three great truths; the condition of the sinner—sick; the purpose of the old dispensation—mercy; the object of His coming—repentance. The new dispensation is no continuation or mending of the old; the new method of God demands its own expression and its own rites.

The final question remains. Sin ultimates in death; it is death. Can Christ deliver from death? A poor victim of an incurable disease touches the fringe of His garment and at once health glows in her veins. When death has done its work can Christ break its hold? A dead child lies in a chamber; He enters, takes her by the hand, and she is restored to life. Three miracles of service, three of fellowship, two of life.

Will this ever be seen? Not now, for blindness in part has happened to Israel, but their eyes shall one day be opened. The time will come when blind Israel shall cry: Son of David, have mercy upon us. Believe ye that I am able to do this? will then be the decisive question—a question now asked for the first time in this gospel. The cure of the dumb man demonized completes this series of ten miracles: demonized, blind, dumb, sin in heart and body closing all sight of God and all expression of divine things; when these are removed, man is saved.

THE PROPAGATION OF THE KINGDOM

THE kingdom, its nature, subjects and laws having been proclaimed in the Sermon on the Mount, and the power of Jesus Christ

Chap. x. to create the character sketched having been shown, we come to the measures adopted for the propagation of the kingdom. The twelve disciples are charged with this duty and commissioned to preach the good news of salvation to the end of the age. Their instructions are found in the tenth chapter.

At first sight the chapter might be considered as a series of directions without any specific arrangement, unconnected aphorisms for the preacher for all time. A little study will show that this discourse, like all of Matthew's discourses, is marked with unity, order, and progress, every verse belonging to the place where it occurs and holding vital relation to its paragraph and to the whole. The divisions are three, clearly marked, each division restricted to its own period, and each possessing its own characteristics. The first covers the time between the ordination of the apostles and the death of Christ; the second, the forty years between the day of Pentecost and the destruction of Jerusalem; the third embraces the remainder of the dispensation.

The first, from verse five through verse fifteen, in every clause shows the period to which its instructions are limited. The persons to whom

the apostles are sent, the message which they are to deliver, the work which they are to perform, the provision which they are to make, the persons with whom they are to associate, the result of their presence, all evince unmistakably that this paragraph ends with the earthly life of Christ. The apostles are forbidden to go to any but Jews; among the Jews they are to seek only the good people, they are charged with a message in which there is nothing but joy, they are to accompany their preaching by working miracles, they are to make no provision for their own support, and wherever they are received they bring peace. Some of these directions were explicitly revoked by Christ before His departure, and all of them were implicitly repealed.

In the next paragraph the atmosphere changes at once. The apostles are sent as sheep among wolves. They shall be the object of the fiercest persecution by both Gentiles and Jews. They will be scourged in the synagogues and condemned before heathen magistrates. Instead of bringing peace to the homes they enter, they will cause the fiercest family divisions and all men shall hate them for Christ's sake. When called to defend themselves before hostile tribunals they are promised the special aid of the Holy Spirit. The reason for this is that the church is as yet in its infantile state. It can suffer and die, but it cannot argue or plead. There has not been time nor opportunity to survey the grounds of faith,

and so it has become an axiom among students of the early years of Christianity that the patience and endurance of these early disciples were admirable, but their intellectual presentation of the faith for which they laid down their lives is of little account.

If now we are asked how we know that the section from verse sixteen to verse twenty-four belongs to the forty years between the day of Pentecost and the destruction of Jerusalem, the answer is obvious; only during those forty years, have Jew and Gentile united in persecuting Christians. Never since the overthrow of the Jewish commonwealth has a synagogue witnessed the scourging of a believer in Jesus. The direction of Christ is to hasten from one place to another because they would not have gone over the cities of Israel until the Son of Man be come. But there has been no city of Israel on the round globe since the fall of Jerusalem. It is to be noted, also, that this season was one of intestine family divisions. This must have been so when Christianity everywhere sought its first converts in Jewish families. To this day there is no such bitterness caused by conversion to the Christian faith as that consequent on the turning to Christ of a member of a Jewish family. Persecutions there have been since, animosities aroused, but the peculiar family strife is characteristic of the first forty years of Christianity.

The remainder of the chapter is devoted to the age in which we now are, the age which is to

end with the coming of Christ. The mark of this period is complete identification with Christ as shown first in the community of treatment. Next, and as a consequence, identity of teaching; the preachers of the gospel are to make known everything that Christ has revealed to them. This they were forbidden to do during His lifetime. They were strictly charged then to tell no man that He was Jesus the Christ; they must keep to themselves the visions they had of His coming glory. Now they are to utter in the light what they have heard in the darkness, to tell from the house-tops that which has been whispered in privacy, to uncover whatever has been covered. Their preaching is to be a revelation, an experience and a message; it will have necessarily three vital relations—to God, to themselves, to those to whom they speak. They are to go forth, without any promise of success, without any assurance of results, but always knowing this, that God loves them, God cares for them, God allows nothing to affect them which He does not notice, that everything happens in accordance with God's arrangement, that by God's own appointment the effect of their preaching will be what Christ came to bring—not peace but a sword; and that finally the rewards of the coming life will be apportioned by the standard of faithfulness and love to Christ. Everything will finally be determined by its relation to Christ. The section closes as it begins, with the identity of Christ and the Christian.

THE RECEPTION OF THE KINGDOM

THE king has outlined his kingdom, has shown his ability to establish it, has taken measures for its propagation; how is the kingdom being received?

Christ's hearers are divided in this chapter into four classes. The first—those who have believed

that Jesus is the Messiah—is repre-

Chap. xi. sented by John the Baptist, whose embassy to Christ has given rise to

much discussion. Some think that prison fare and Christ's apparent abandonment of John to his fate had caused him to waver in the testimony he had borne to the Messiah. Others think that John's inquiry is not for his own sake, but to establish the faith of His disciples. But Christ's answer is addressed to John, and His discourse to the multitudes after the departure of the disciples is exclusively of John. He vindicates the sturdy herald from the supposition that the cause of the embassy is to be found in John's fickle character; he was no reed shaken in the wind. His inquiry could not be accounted for on the ground that he had succumbed to the hardships of prison life; the fare and garb of a prisoner would have no effect on one who from his infancy had known only the diet and clothing of the wilderness. It was not because he was no prophet; he was the grandest ever born of woman; what was the reason for the message?

To John He was the Christ. Observe the words of the evangelist: "Now, when John had heard

in the prison the works of *the Christ*”—this is the only place in his narrative where Matthew so names Him—“he sent by His disciples, saying: Art thou the Coming One, or are we to look for another?”—one of another kind? John had testified of one coming with a fan in his hand, thoroughly to cleanse his floor and gather the wheat into his garner, and burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. So sang the Minor Prophets who foretell John’s advent and message. But to John’s eyes Jesus is doing nothing of this. The axe might be lying at the root of the trees, but Jesus had not lifted it. Instead of sweeping away the ungodly, He is going about Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, opening the eyes of blind beggars, healing lepers, casting out demons from a Gadarene. What matters it whether there is one blind beggar more or less in Galilee, whether an old woman is relieved for a time from the sickness to which in the end she must succumb? Is this the work to which John predicted the Messiah would set His hand? Are there to be two Messiahs?

Our Lord’s answer to John’s inquiry is first a statement of what He is doing, adding: “Happy is he who is not caused to stumble by the course I am pursuing;” He vindicates John from the aspersions which might be cast on his person and office, declaring him the greatest of mankind; the reason for John’s perplexity is found in the fact that the kingdom of heaven is in every way a matter of pure revelation; no one

can tell beforehand how it is to be established; great as John is, the least member of that kingdom after it has come will know more about it than the wisest and best before its methods have been declared by the lips of the king. Salvation for the race is to be secured by self-abnegation and death, and then the judgment will come: but this has been kept secret from the foundation of the world. The time for the revelation is not yet.

The next class are "this generation" who are determined not to conform themselves to the kingdom, but are determined the kingdom shall conform to them. With violent hands they seize on it, trying to shape it so as to conform to their carnal ideas. Until John, the prophets and the law were the sources of information of the divine will and purpose. If they would receive John, he would be the Elijah to lead them into the New Dispensation. But they had no ears to hear. They determined to have things their own way, and when John called on them to repent, they said: No, the kingdom is coming, we are ready for it, it is time for rejoicing. When Christ came and said, Rejoice, they said: No, we will not rejoice that sinners are forgiven, we do not want them forgiven; they must not be received into our society. We are better than they; we do not need forgiveness, and we will not allow others to be forgiven.

The next class is the avowed unbeliever—Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum—unmoved by Christ's presence or works. In God's sight there

is a guilt greater than that of the flagrant immorality of Sodom—the guilt of rejecting Christ.

The last class is that of the babes in spirit, who, not counting themselves wise and discerning, are ready to hear and receive the revelation from above. To such Christ comes, and they come to Him, weary and heavy laden, to find the rest which He alone can give. Ah! this rest!—rest to the intellect, weary and baffled in its efforts to ascertain the truth, not knowing what to believe; rest for the conscience, burdened with a load of guilt; rest for the heart, disappointed and bleeding; rest for the will, clamorous and unsubdued; rest, the very rest of heaven, into which the soul enters, to know the peace of God which passes understanding! Identified with Christ, wearing His yoke, bearing His burden, of His fullness they all receive and grace for grace.

These, then, are the four classes of hearers, and these include all; those who misunderstand, those who pervert, those who reject, those who, in the spirit of little children, accept as it is revealed to them by the Father.

ANTAGONISM TO THE KINGDOM RESULTS IN THE EX- CLUSION OF ALL TIES OF THE FLESH

THE thoughtful reader of the New Testament is often surprised when his attention is first called to the fact that the immediate
Chap. xii. occasion of the determination by the Jewish rulers to put Christ to death is stated in all the gospels to be His relation to

Exclusion of all Ties of the Flesh 79

CHAP. XII.]

the Sabbath. What there is in His Sabbath teaching to arouse such hostility does not at once appear, particularly if the common explanation is accepted, that our Lord was correcting erroneous teachings of the rabbis, and showing that works of necessity and mercy are lawful on the Sabbath. But, in the first place, there is nothing in this to arouse the wrath or fear of the Jews, and in the second place, this is not the teaching of Christ. He does not say: Who of you shall *see* a sheep which has fallen into a pit, shall *see* an ox or an ass in a stall, but, Who of you shall *have* one sheep, shall *have* an ox or an ass in a stall? The question is, who is Christ, and what relation does He bear to the Jewish nation? He claims that they are His people, that as Son of Man He is greater than their greatest king, greater than the temple, greater than the sacrifices, greater than the Sabbath; that all these were ordained for the sake of redemption, that God might through them show mercy; that His object was to give, not to receive, and that necessarily the Redeemer was greater than all the means of redemption. Thus in John, the healing of the impotent man on the Sabbath determined the Jews to put Christ to death because He claimed that He was doing just what God was doing on His Sabbath, making Himself equal with God. He asserted that the Jewish people were *His* people, and as the owner of the sheep is bound to deliver it from the ditch into which it has fallen, as the owner of animals is bound to care for them

on the Sabbath day, so He must, if faithful to His relation, act fittingly, appropriately, becomingly, on the Sabbath, for this is what the word "good" means in the assertion that it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day.

The Jewish Sabbath was the one peculiar and distinctive ordinance of the nation. Other nations practiced circumcision, offered sacrifices, had temples and performed religious rites similar to those of the Jews, but the Sabbath was the Jewish national flag. In it they claimed a peculiar relation to God as their creator, redeemer and rest. As the nation grew in national feeling and pride, in the conception of separation from all other peoples and superiority to them, it became more and more tenacious of the Sabbath. It saw in that institution the keynote to all the other great observances of the year, with the exception, perhaps, of the Passover. "Wherever the Jew went, its observance became the most visible badge of his nationality. The passages of Latin literature which indicate this are too well known to require citation." (Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," article, "Sabbath.")

The religious leaders of the Jews had already broken with Christ, as we learn in the ninth chapter, on the question of the forgiveness of sins and the treatment of sinners. As Christ interprets the Messianic principles, what advantage is there in the righteousness which distinguished these religious leaders from transgressors? If

Exclusion of all Ties of the Flesh 81

CHAP. XII.]

sin is to be forgiven and sinners treated as if they had not sinned, the righteous have neither distinction nor superiority. If now the Jewish nation is to be deprived of its distinction from other nations, what is the use of being God's people? So, as Caiaphas afterward plainly stated, they concluded that it was better for one man to die than that the nation perish, and they determine to put Christ to death. When our Lord heard of this, He withdrew from thence, not because He could not meet and overcome them; He did not fear such bruised reeds or smoking flax, He could blast them with a breath of His mouth; but for the sake of the Gentiles who are to be brought to believe in Him, He will not strive nor cry, nor shall His voice be heard in the streets.

Then is brought to Him a man who is the symbol and representative of a nation, possessed by an evil spirit, blind and dumb. He healed him so that the man both spake and saw. This acted parable convinced the common people that the son of David stood before them; He had power to deliver Israel from its spiritual bondage, its blindness and its dumbness. But the Pharisees saw in this wondrous work only an evidence of diabolism. By the prince of the demons He casts out demons. Such an accusation is evidence of moral depravity so utter that salvation is impossible. Language is not only the exponent of character, but it performs a most important part in making character. Drive back the

wrong thought, deny its existence, and it becomes a matter of sorrow and regret. Utter it, and by its expression you have given it life and made it permanently a part of yourself. If sin were never incarnated in speech, it would have no dwelling-place. The young man who has never spoken an impure word has done a great deal to form a pure character. "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

The enemies of Christ make a demand, which they will make again and again, for a material sign. Christ tells them that manifestation of physical power would prove nothing as to the possession of spiritual power. Their very demand shows their bondage to materialism. Because a being has great physical strength, though it be infinite, is no reason why I should love him, or trust him, or admire or venerate him. Christ will give them but one sign, the sign of life. Sin is death; He has come that men might have life and might have it more abundantly. He will give the sign of His life-giving power in His resurrection. That will be the mighty manifestation of His work; if there be no resurrection, there is no salvation.

The declaration of Christ of the impossibility of the salvation of His opponents is no arbitrary judgment. They had shown themselves incapable of all moral discrimination. When incarnate love stood before them, doing its mighty works, they thought it was Satan. They did not know

Exclusion of all Ties of the Flesh 83

CHAP. XII.]

heaven from hell, sin from holiness, God from the devil. How could they be saved? What was there to which to appeal? What basis on which to build? Their case was hopeless. The old demon of idolatry which had been the sin of their fathers had been driven out; but worse sins had entered and housed themselves—pride, self-righteousness, arrogance—just the demons which prevent the acceptance of a Saviour. So the nation was doomed. The seventy years of Babylonish captivity, which had cured the nation of idolatry, must be succeeded by a dispersion numbered by centuries instead of years, and sufferings compared to which the Babylonian treatment was a pleasure. Ah! what sin has this nation committed which is as much greater than idolatry as the centuries of a scattered and peeled people in all lands is worse than the seventy years of the captivity in Babylon?

It has become manifest that the Kingdom of Heaven cannot be established on the lines of the flesh—of natural relationship. The flesh has had a fair trial and has failed. Christ disrupts the ties of the flesh and establishes a new relationship. The Kingdom of Heaven is to know no man after the flesh; its relations are to be spiritual; the ties which bind men to Christ and to each other are to be of a heavenly nature. "Whosoever shall do the will of My Father who is in Heaven, the same is My brother and sister and mother."

THE MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM

WITH the thirteenth chapter begins a revelation of the utmost importance in the history of our Lord's work. The preceding portion of the gospel has been occupied with the presentation of the king and His kingdom. That the proclamation of the kingdom, be it ever so explicit and attractive, and that the presentation of the king, accompanied with the completest proof of His preëminence and power, will not ultimate in His reception by either rulers or people, has become evident. What has been done thus far has issued in the virtual rejection by the king and by the nation. Christ now turns to another method—a method unknown to the highest wisdom of the world, a stumbling-block to the Jews and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, the wisdom of God and the power of God, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory—a crucified Christ.

This great mystery, the mystery of the kingdom, Christ proceeds to unfold. A mystery in the New Testament is a truth peculiar to Christianity, undiscoverable by human reason, made known by revelation. In revealing the mysteries of the kingdom, Christ opens His mouth in parables, and utters things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world. Up to this time He has declared His kingly character and authority; He is greater than David, than

Solomon, than the temple; He has power to forgive sins. Now He is to reveal Himself as the Christ; the treasure which He seeks can be gained only by selling all that He has. This abandonment of everything for the pearl of great price finds its culmination in His death on the cross, where literally He is stripped of all that He possessed, and His life is taken from Him. How full and pregnant that single clause—He sold all that He had—is known only after the sacrifice on Calvary. The way to the throne is a path which never dawned on the mind of man until the Lord revealed it in this chapter.

So the process of the kingdom no man ever anticipated. It has pleased God to put a wide interval between the sowing and the reaping. It has pleased Him also, to have the same infelicities accompany the spiritual sowing which are inseparable from the farmer's methods. Some of the seed is utterly lost; some excites hope only to disappoint it; some is faithless to its promise, and only one class out of four rewards the toil of the husbandman with an abundant return. Still further, this last class is not one of unmixed good; tares grow up with the wheat and continue until the final harvest. When Christianity becomes great and powerful, filling the whole organized earth and sitting on the throne of the Cæsars, every foul passion of humanity grasps the sceptre; pride, ambition, sinful desire of all kinds satisfy themselves with the spoils which are seized in the name of Christ.

When the wild birds of the air descend on the sacrifice, there is no Abraham to drive them away (Gen. xv. 2). Paganism and Judaism clothe themselves in the garments of the crucified, and sitting ostentatiously under the cross, spattered with His blood, divide His garments. The history of Christendom is the comment and explanation of this parable of the mustard seed. Still farther, so unique is Christianity, so completely a heavenly creation, that if a woman mingles with it a foreign substance just so far as that substance exerts its unchecked influence, just so far it destroys a revealed Christianity.

This is the human side. Look at the divine side—the kingdom as God sees it. It is treasure hid in a field—the world. I stood the other day on a New England hill. Through the plain before me rolled one of those beautiful rivers peculiar to that country. As far as the eye could reach was a farming country, dotted with the houses of prosperous husbandmen. But my attention was particularly attracted to a thriving city built on both sides of that river. It was a picture to be remembered for a lifetime, with its busy streets, its teeming life, its thousands of inhabitants, its products manufactured for all parts of the world. I can remember as a boy when there was nothing of the kind in the landscape, and no hint of such a city. One day a man came there who saw the possibilities of the future. He bought the farms, associated with himself like-minded men, and the result is before you.

The owners of the farms had not the knowledge, the skill, the capital, for such an enterprise. They received for their farms enough to render them independent for the rest of their days, and the city sprang up. So one day will be seen the city of the blessed, the treasure hid in the field. From some height the eye shall trace the golden streets which stretch forth in the city of our God, from radiant summits shall we gaze on that inheritance of the blessed which it has been the joy of Christ to prepare for His chosen. The pearl of great price, so precious that Christ must sell all that He has to buy it, expresses the place His Church has in His esteem and affections. Then you will see that the method of the kingdom with all its delay and imperfections was no accident, but a part of God's eternal purpose; the net is divinely ordained to be cast into the sea to gather of every kind, leaving the separation and rectification of all until the judgment-day.

Christ justifies this process of the kingdom, so new, so startling, and unexpected, by three considerations. First, by an appeal to God's universal methods in nature. In sending you out to labor under these unwelcome conditions, God is doing what He has always done with men who are working for the future. Every farmer who has sown a field of grain has done it under the same limitations and with the same infelicities which will attend you; the principles of your work are those which underlie all human action. Second, this is predicted in the Scriptures.

Third, this is in accordance with the teachings of history. The new is no contradiction of the old; the scribe instructed in the kingdom of heaven will bring out of His treasure things new and old, in harmonious combination. The typical teacher is one who is not ashamed of the old, nor afraid of the new, but loves and honors both.

Our Lord uses the term "parable" in Matthew in a more restricted sense than in the other gospels. Here it is confined to the setting forth of spiritual truths under the forms of ordinary human life, and its purpose is to gain the assent of the hearer to truth which would be rejected if presented in simple and naked statement. By the parable they see while yet they do not see, and thus having gained their assent, the way is opened for the truth in due time to be received and acknowledged. The light is not brought to be hidden, put under a bushel or under a bed, but to be placed on a candlestick; the disciples are one day to proclaim on the house-tops what they now hear in the ear.

This chapter contains the essential truths of Christianity; they are uttered now for the first time; they pertain to the deepest secrets of the divine procedure; the disciples do not understand them as yet; we shall see them developed and explained as we proceed; meanwhile it is worth noticing now that we enter here on a study of the Christ accomplishing His purpose by humiliation, sacrifice and death, giving Him-

CHAP. XIV.]

self for His people; the king appearing, with the exception of the vision restricted to Himself and three others on the Mount of Transfiguration, only in His eschatological discourses until His entry into Jerusalem to die. We shall soon see as decided a change in the character of His miracles as in the form of His teaching.

THE NEW ORDER OF MIRACLES

THE first answer of the civil authority to John's message was his imprisonment; upon this began Christ's Galilean ministry, iv. 12.

Chap. xiv. The death of John by the command of the reigning authority is the final answer; this is the precedent to the death of Christ. The causal connection between these will be seen when we remember that the Herodian family was the embodiment of the idea of a state church; the attempted realization of Jewish nationality, the rival of the kingdom which our Lord came to establish. "Side by side with the spiritual 'kingdom of God,' proclaimed by John the Baptist, and founded by the Lord, a kingdom of the world was established, which in its external splendor recalled the traditional magnificence of Solomon. The simultaneous realization of the two principles, national and spiritual, which had long variously influenced the Jews, in the establishment of a dynasty and a church, is a fact pregnant with instruction. In the fullness of time a descendant of Esau established a false counterpart of the promised glories of Mes-

siah." This national kingdom after the flesh was the foe which first confronted Christ, in which centred the opposition to Him, and which at last crucified Him (John xi. 47-50).

Our Lord now begins a series of miracles which set forth His spiritual character and relations. His miracles heretofore are manifestations of what He can do; those are manifestations of what He is. At the end of a day's teaching He feeds five thousand men, besides women and children, with five loaves and two fishes. By this miracle and the accompanying teaching Christ declares the nature and means of the salvation He came to accomplish. It is salvation from the death of sin by means of spiritual life imparted and sustained by Him. Not only must He be obeyed, He must be received. His life must become their life; they must eat His flesh and drink His blood; if they do not, His coming will profit them nothing. If they receive Him spiritually, every instinct of their nature will be satisfied; His flesh will be food indeed, and His blood, drink indeed.

At the close of this miracle, the evangelist tells us that "immediately He constrained His disciples to enter into the boat and to go before Him to the other side until He should dismiss the multitudes. And having dismissed the multitudes, He went up into the mountain apart to pray." If we had this account only, we should wonder why He "constrained" the disciples, why He sent them away before He dismissed the multitudes, and why He left the disciples to

go on their way alone while He went up into the mountain to pray. We have the explanation in the gospel according to John. The enthusiasm of the multitudes was wrought to its highest pitch by this new and wonderful manifestation of the power of Christ. They saw in Him a leader who could fulfill their highest hopes. We are often told that the Jews rejected Christ as the Messiah because He did not come in the pomp and panoply of war, with armies and battalions. Not at all. They saw in Christ what was worth a thousand times more. If He could put Himself at their head, they would have a leader whose inherent power would insure victory. No opposing force could successfully resist those who would flock to His banner. Should any of them be wounded in battle, His touch would heal them; should any be killed, His word would restore life; if they needed provisions, He could feed thousands with the bread that dropped from His fingers. Armed with these powers, He must not evade nor decline the work for which He was supernaturally endowed. They would take Him by force and *make* Him a king. In sympathy with this feeling was every patriotic impulse of the disciples. They could not but echo the wish of the multitudes that Christ would assume the leadership and set up the Messianic kingdom. So Christ must "constrain" His disciples to get into the boat and go to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. He did send them away, but they would not be put

off; they followed Him and the next day renewed their urgent request. He utterly refused to hold any relation to them other than a spiritual one; He told them they were clamoring for earthly food; He would give them eternal life and spiritual sustenance. When they found He was inexorable in His refusal to do anything for them save to satisfy spiritual instincts, when He told them the flesh profits nothing, they would have no more to do with Him. From that hour His popularity declined. The rulers had previously broken with Him on account of this position. Now the people leave Him. So every controversy in the church since that time comes finally back to this never-ceasing strife between the flesh and the spirit. It is the key to all the disputes of Christianity, the solvent of all questions. The warfare is unceasing and relentless. At the very beginning of an elect family, the one born of the flesh persecuted Him who was born after the spirit: so it was in Paul's time, so it is now, so will it ever be until all warfare ceases.

Into one ear alone could Jesus pour the emotions which filled His heart. He must disappoint and deny all those who begged Him to use for the accomplishment of the dearest wish of their hearts the power divinely bestowed on Him. It is the mountain temptation over again, only this time urged by all who admired and trusted and loved Him. How hard such a denial is can be known only by those who have passed through the trial. So Jesus retires from the disciples and

Holiness of the Kingdom Defined 93

CHAPS. XV., XVI. 1-12.]

the multitude to hold communion with God. If it were lawful, one might wish to hear that prayer, but it is not lawful. Even we, disciples, know what it is to have communion with God which our dearest and most loved cannot share. We can tell to God what we cannot tell to any human being.

It is perfectly natural that in the ecstasy of His spiritual communion, in His triumph over nature, Christ should walk on the water, superior to all natural laws. Peter, catching that inspiration which so often accompanied the presence of Jesus, volunteered to accompany Him. It was the unconscious prediction of the future. So was the voyage over the sea of Galilee, the church, in the night, during the absence of her Lord, tossing on the troubled waters of this world, while the first watch passes and He comes not, and the second and the third; and when He comes she does not recognize Him until His voice is heard. But at His presence—*parousia*!—the storm will cease, and the ship will be at the long-desired haven.

THE HOLINESS OF THE KINGDOM DEFINED

IN the training of the Jewish nation for the fulfillment of their vocation as a people through whom salvation was to come to the world, it was necessary to give them first the idea of holiness. Holiness is separation. The Jews were children and must be

Chaps. xv., xvi.
1-12.

taught, as all children are taught, by commands respecting outward and sensible objects. Their separation from the idolatrous nations around them must be by some method which would enter most intimately into their daily life, which would be manifest to the senses, and which would be continually apparent to their neighbors. Food and dress are the two essentials of life. Paul seems to think they are the only essentials (1 Tim. vi. 8); so our Lord regards them (Matt. vi. 25-31; Luke xii. 22-28). Hence the distinction between the Jews and other nations was made in these articles. Certain kinds of food were prohibited, and certain articles of dress enjoined.

But the mass of the Jews and their religious guides utterly mistook the purpose of God in these regulations and made the means the end. Blind to the great design of God in preparing them to be a spiritual people for the good of others, they thought that the distinction between them and the rest of the world was ordained because they were really superior to other peoples, and that the forbidden things were forbidden because of essential uncleanness. How firmly this notion took possession of them is seen by the serious trouble which arose in the early church on the question of eating with the Gentiles. Acting on their theory of the inherent unholiness of outward things, they added greatly to the list of requirements, and, of course, by so doing, nullified the law of God. Whenever any-

[CHAPS. xv., xvi. 1-12.]

thing is imposed as of divine appointment which God has not appointed, some command of God is set aside. This is inevitable. Make a day holy which God has not made holy, and you destroy God's holy day.

The blindness of the Pharisees to everything but externality resulted in a character of awful depravity. They made broad their phylacteries and enlarged the fringe of their garments, they tithed mint, anise and cummin, they cleansed the outside of the cup and platter, but neglected mercy and judgment and love—whited sepulchres, outwardly beautiful, but within full of hypocrisy and of iniquity. The regulations of the Levitical code, differentiating the clean and the unclean, had been perverted into a means of the deepest evil. And now, our Lord sweeps them all away. He calls the multitude, and says, Hear and understand: not that which goes into the mouth defiles the man, but that which comes out of the mouth; this defiles the man. This He said, making all things clean. Henceforth every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer (1 Tim. iv. 5).

The great fact thus declared is immediately illustrated. A Syro-phenician woman, a Canaanite, one of that accursed race doomed to extermination by the Israelites when they entered on the promised land, cries to Christ to deliver her daughter from the dominion of a demon. Her

request is granted; in her persistent prayer for the child's salvation, she manifests such possession of the primal grace of Christianity as to draw the highest encomium from the lips of the delighted Master. This Canaanite, scion of the race specially under the ban, wins and receives the admiration and affection of all who, in subsequent ages, call on the Lord, and becomes for all time the model of faith, humility, and affection.

No wonder that this miracle encourages a great multitude to bring their burdens and cast them at His feet. No wonder that strangers and foreigners as they were, they glorify the God of Israel.

The vital relation of Christ to other peoples than the Jews is now shown in the feeding of the four thousand. He is the life and sustentation of all who, like the Canaanite woman, see in Him their Deliverer. The words used in connection with this miracle are carefully discriminated in both the gospels in which the second miracle is recorded. In the account of the feeding of the five thousand, given in all the gospels, the term for "basket" is the one which designates the basket peculiar to the Jews; the term in the account of the other miracle given only by Matthew and Mark, is the appellation for the travelling basket or pannier used by other nations.

The Pharisees persist in their bondage to the external, and again demand, as they have before demanded, a visible proof of Christ's Messiahship

CHAP. XVI. 13-28.]

by some manifestation in the heavens. He tells them that God's spiritual dealings are in accordance with spiritual laws. They understood the outward and physical; of the laws of nature they knew the sequence and precedents—why were they blind to the manifestation of God's spiritual dealings, equally subject to law, equally pervasive, and equally capable of being interpreted? God is working all about them, but they see neither the indications of approaching day, nor the signs of approaching wrath. The nation married to a holy God had proven faithless to its covenant vows; sinful and adulterous, they had given themselves over to idolatry, worshipping the creature more than the Creator; no sign should be given them. And He left them and departed. With the warning to His disciples to beware of the leaven of materialism which had brought these religionists to so sad an end, Christ turns away from His opponents to devote Himself henceforth to the unfolding to His disciples of the new method of the Divine working.

THE FUNDAMENTAL METHODS OF THE KINGDOM DECLARED

THE disciples are now prepared for the explicit statement of the methods by which
Chap. xvi. the kingdom is to be established.
13-28. They are declared for the first time in the borders of Cæsarea Philippi, as follows;

The nature and office of Christ; vs. 13-17.

The nature and office of the church; vs. 18, 19.

The nature and method of redemption; vs. 21-23.

The nature of Christianity; v. 24.

All these are New Testament mysteries, *i. e.*, they are truths that could never have been discovered by any process of the human intellect; they are not known from consciousness, or intuition, or reason, or logic; they are divinely revealed. They are unique truths. They have had no previous parallel in human experience or knowledge, while the principles on which they rest are in the very warp and woof of man's constitution.

1. To the disciples is put that question the answer to which is henceforward to determine human character and decide human destiny, What think you of Christ?

First is given the opinion of others. The multitude recognize Him as a teacher clothed with more than human authority—John, Elijah, Jeremiah, at any rate, a prophet. Had Jesus been content with this, He might have remained in Jerusalem without molestation, for the Jews were always willing to acknowledge Him as a teacher more than human. From the beginning to the close of His ministry, attestations of this fact are abundant (John iii. 2; Luke xx. 21). His death came from His persistent claim to be much more than a teacher sent from God. Peter, in behalf of the apostles, formally and officially de-

clares His true relation and office: Thou art the Christ—the Anointed—the Son of the living God.

We have already anticipated the characterization of this answer by Christ. The recognition of the anointing of Christ for His redemption work can come only by divine revelation; flesh and blood—that which is merely human—can neither apprehend nor impart it.

2. Our Lord now declares that He is about to bring into existence a body of which the revelation of Christ to the soul by the Father shall be the informing principle. To this body He will impart eternal life and will give to it the keys of the kingdom. While all other human associations and ties are sundered by death, over the existence and relations of the church death shall have no power. “The saints on earth and all the dead, but one communion make.” To this body, of heavenly origin, united in heavenly relations, knowing nothing of the principles either of earthly union or division, called with a heavenly calling, with a heavenly inheritance, a heavenly citizenship, a heavenly hope, and maintaining a heavenly walk, the administration of the kingdom shall be committed, and for the proper discharge of its functions, the promise of inspiration is given; “whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.”

3. A still more startling and wonderful revelation is made. “From that time,” a phrase used

only once besides in this gospel, at the beginning of the Galilean ministry (Chap. iv. 17) Christ tells them that He must suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and must be killed, and be raised again the third day. Redemption is to be gained by the death of the Redeemer; the cross is the way to the throne. At this appalling statement, so unexpected and unwelcome, no wonder that Peter cries, "This must not be, this must not be." Is this the end of all our love and hope and trust? Is the cross the kingdom of righteousness? Is defeat victory, and is death, the curse of sin, the consummation of the prophecies?

4. Not only must I die, says Christ, but you must die also. Life can be saved only by losing it. If you are to be Christed, Christianed, you must share with Me this dreaded experience. You must know what it is to die to yourself, and to take up the cross. Observe, here comes again an absolutely new idea. Christ does not speak of self-denial but of denial of self. Self-denial is known to every form of human exertion. It is indispensable to all human attainment, whether of good or evil. All religions know it and practice it. In all paganism asceticism is an indispensable element. Denial of self, not the denial of one part of self, to gratify another part, but an utter denial, the death of self for others, is peculiar to Christianity, for the place of self can be occupied only by Christ. It is so completely the death of self that self cannot determine either

CHAP. XVI. 13-28.]

the act or time of any offering. We have no right to make any sacrifice except as God determines. The death of Christ was a voluntary act on His part; no man took His life from Him, but He laid it down of Himself; yet He could do this only at the time and in the way appointed by the Father.

These great truths are not yet to be declared to the world. Then charged He His disciples that they should tell no man that He was Jesus the Christ. They were not prepared to make known the wondrous revelations to which they had listened, and the world was not prepared to receive them. There could be fitness neither for the speaking nor the hearing, until the Spirit is poured out from on high, anointing the herald as the Master was anointed, and convincing the world of sin, because they had not believed on Christ. When the time comes for the promulgation of the truth, the cross will be the great factor in all successful work for the Master; as Christ says, I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me. Christ's death for others, now so appalling in the shadow it casts, will be the theme of the Christian preacher in all ages, the only power to break the heart and subdue the will.

In these days, when we are so continually exhorted to go "back to the gospels," and to rediscover the human side of Christ, it is well to remember that the disciples were forbidden to preach the Christ of the gospels, that it was not

7,045-

the conception of Christ's human nature that saved men, but His divine; that if He had been content with the acknowledgment of perfect human virtue and perfect teaching, He would not have been crucified; and that now, as of old, we should know no Christ after the flesh, but ever preach a crucified and risen Lord, not a memory, but a living Christ.

THE TRANSFIGURATION

In His determination to close His earthly career by death on the cross, Christ finds, as in His refusal of an earthly kingship, no possible sympathy from man. Now, as then, He must turn to the one ear into which He can pour all the emotions of His soul. Taking with Him three disciples, He goes up into the mountain to pray. From the upper world, two men are sent, with whom He converses about His approaching exodus. As He prays, the spirit of sacrifice of self which is the cause of that exodus transfigures the earthly form, so that not only the fashion of His face changed, but His very raiment becomes radiant with unearthly brightness. Once more, as at His baptism, the voice of God is heard from the opened heavens: This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. The force of the Greek tense here cannot be adequately expressed by an English translation. It denotes a definite act as the entrance on a state, and here refers, as before, to Christ's devoting Himself to death: Therefore does My Father love Me, because I lay

CHAP. XVII. 14-20.]

down My life that I might take it again (John x. 17). God loved His Son from eternity for His holy and lovely attributes, but all these are disregarded in comparison with the love evoked by Christ's giving His life for sinners.

In the Second Epistle of Peter, i. 16-18, this wonderful vision is interpreted in its relation to the future. It is the prophecy and illustration of the coming of Christ with power and glory.

THE KINGDOM AWAITING ITS CONSUMMATION

DESCENDING from the mountain, the disciples meet an acted prediction. The church in the absence of her Lord, is surrounded

Chap. xvii. by a mocking crowd who jeer at
14-20. the failure of Christ's followers
 when confronted by an evil world,
 and taunt them with their inability to remove the
 ills with which man is afflicted. The demons
 shall be driven from their possession when the
 Lord makes His appearance, but even now the
 mountains would vanish if faith were exercised.
 Nothing is impossible to him who believes; but
 faith is victorious only when accompanied by
 prayer and fasting—communion with God and
 victory over self.

For the present, the splendor of the transfiguration must remain veiled. Its story must not be told until the Son of man is risen from the dead. The privileges of sonship cannot yet be claimed. The collectors of the half shekel—the tax for the support of the temple—come with the question,

Does not your Master pay the half shekel? Christ is God's son, and they who are identified with Him in death and life are sons of God, but the privileges of that relation must be held in abeyance until their manifestation in glory. The claim, misunderstood, would cause men to stumble. By the miraculous provision of the sum needed, the sonship is vindicated and the stumbling prevented.

Christ now begins His instructions to His disciples from the point of view of these new revelations. He shows the spirit, the principle, the law, the rewards and the honors of the life consequent on death. The spirit is the spirit of a little child, the principle is hatred of sin, the law is the primal law of holiness and the renunciation of all things for Christ; the rewards and honors are participation with Christ.

The presentation of the kingdom began with righteousness. Righteousness is the point of view of the Sermon on the Mount, whose ultimate expression is, "Do to others as you wish them to do to you." The principle of the new life is beyond this; it is sacrifice and service for others. Hence the starting-point in the development of the new teaching is not righteousness but sin. The one end of the Christian as it is of Christ is salvation from sin.

Sin, then, is the thing the most to be dreaded. Terrible will be his fate who causes others to sin. Sin in ourselves must be avoided at the cost, if necessary, of our most cherished possessions. If

CHAP. XVII. 14-20.]

others sin, we are to take all possible means to reclaim them; and if sin is committed against us, we are to forgive it, that is, to put it away, even to seventy times seven. Biblical forgiveness is not primarily the remission of the penalty of a violated law, but the removal of the sin. It is the "blotting out as a thick cloud," the "casting into the depths of the sea," the "casting behind one's back," it is bringing about a state in which sin does not exist. We sometimes say, "I will forgive, but I can never forget;" God says, "Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more."

By what law shall those who are thus identified with Christ regulate their conduct? By the law of primal holiness. The Mosaic law and all civil laws, dealing with men whose hearts are not right with God, are obliged to have a standard short of perfection. In a law which man is to enforce on his fellow by pains and penalties this is unavoidable. But the law for men who are a law unto themselves, who shape their conduct by the law of love, will not allow any deviation from perfection. No such man can take advantage of any human law which permits what is wrong in itself. Civil law, for example, rightfully limits the time in which the collection of a debt can be enforced, but the Christian is not absolved from his obligation by any such legal enactment. No law of man can affect the Christian's moral obligations or his moral conduct.

The relation of such a man to this world's wealth is next considered. It must be held at the call of Christ, ready to be sacrificed for others. It exists, as does its owner, for Christ, for, "whether we live, we live unto the Lord, or whether we die, we die unto the Lord." How much there is by very necessity connected with the rich man's life, all his relations, his plans, the measures which are his aim, to enforce the saying of our Lord as to the difficulty of entrance into the kingdom, the purpose of this paper will not allow me to show. Said a Christian man of wealth, "How much there must be in a rich man's life to make it difficult for him to be a Christian, no one but a rich man knows."

What are the rewards of identification with Christ? The administration of the kingdom, manifold more than is abandoned, and eternal life. These rewards are not to be allotted, however, in accordance with the preconceived ideas of men. God will distribute them as He sees proper, though in consonance with eternal justice.

The honors of the kingdom—how shall they be bestowed? On the same great principle of identification with Christ in His sufferings and service for others. He who is the servant and slave of others, shall share the honors of Him who came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

THE FINAL PRESENTATION OF THE KING TO THE JEWISH NATION

THE time has come for the third and final presentation of Christ to the Jewish people. He will appear publicly as God's representative, assert His Messianic character by word and work, and accept the public homage of the multitude; His reception or rejection by the city and nation will determine their fate.

The royal approach to Jerusalem begins with a great multitude following Him from Jericho, a city which had peculiar relations to the conquest of Judea under the first Joshua. The significant miracle of opening the eyes of the blind, a miracle which, in Matthew, is always at the close of a cycle of miracles, and (where the particulars are recorded) always accompanied by the recognition of Christ as the Son of David, and always wrought by the personal touch of the Lord Jesus, appropriately closes the Galilean teachings and begins the triumphal entry. It is a miracle of power and promise and hope which looks backward and forward.

At Bethphage, two disciples are directed to run across the ravine, and bring the colt on which, according to prophecy, He may make His entrance into the city. The enthusiasm of the multitude will not allow even the feet of the beast to touch the ground. The rumor of the approaching procession reaches Jerusalem, and

great multitudes pour out to meet Him: these turn and precede Him, while the multitudes that go before and those that follow cry, "Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest." The whole city is "shaken."¹

Our Lord asserts His Messianic office, as at His first ministry in Jerusalem, by driving from the temple those who were perverting it into a den of robbers. The authorities demand that He refuse the ascription to Him of the titles and honors which belong to the promised Messiah. He replies that God accepts the praise which comes from the unconscious admiration of infants, and He will not silence the voices of the children.

Salvation and judgment always walk hand in hand. Christ ends the day by blasting the fig-tree, the emblem of the nation, full of promise but barren of fruit, poisoning the ground, standing like a mountain in the way of the gospel.

All the opponents of Christ in turn now confront Him. First comes unbelief, challenging Christ's credentials. The reply is, "Can you comprehend them? Only a sinner can recognize a Saviour. Was the demand of John the Baptist for your repentance from heaven or earth?" They avowed that they could not tell, and by this acknowledgment declared their unfitness to be re-

¹ The word translated in King James by "moved" is found in this gospel, xxvii. 51; xxviii. 4; Haggai ii. 7; Heb. xii. 26. It is the word from which our English term "seismic" and its cognates come.

CHAPS. XXI. XXIII.]

ligious teachers. Their guilt was shown by three parables in which Christ portrayed their course toward John the Baptist, toward the Son Himself, toward the messengers of the gospel. Even if they should claim a place at the marriage feast, the absence of the wedding garment would condemn them.

Unbelief gives way to worldliness with its question as to Cæsar. Then rationalism with its difficulties about the resurrection. Formalism follows, questioning the comparative worth of laws. Unbelief, worldliness, rationalism, formalism—the prime foes of Christ and of Christianity in all ages, ordinarily in this order.

Christ becomes the questioner; He puts to them that solemn inquiry the answer to which determines the fate of all to whom Christ is presented, the question which He asked His disciples in the borders of Cæsarea Philippi, “What think you of the Christ?” They are unable to answer; it is useless to continue longer in the endeavor to make them see His true character and all questioning ceases.

Our Lord now begins His parting instructions. Addressing the same audience as at the delivery of the Sermon of the Mount, He tells them first of their relations to civil society. The seat of Moses is of divine appointment and they who occupy it, wicked as they are, must be obeyed in their proper jurisdiction. Government is ordained by God; its authority is not determined by the moral character of the administrator. In all mat-

ters which belong to the jurisdiction of the state, the duty of the Christian is obedience. I bow to his office, for in it he is the minister of God (Rom. xiii. 1-7).

But in spiritual relations this submission to man is forbidden. The injunction of Christ in verses 8-10¹ is often understood as a prohibition of the title of father, etc. The meaning is far deeper. It is a declaration of the essential relations of man to God. Three things constitute a Christian—what he is, what he believes, what he does; doctrine, experience, practice. Man needs for his spiritual being three things—life, instruction, guidance; just what our Lord declares in the ten words of the gospel—"I am the way, and the truth, and the life." The Roman Catholic church, the most marvellous religious body on earth, has caught these three things with its usual insight and avows its ability to supply them. The office of the Roman Catholic church is claimed to be threefold—the priestly office imparting and sustaining life by means of the sacraments, the teaching office endowed with infallibility, the guiding office by spiritual confessors. These three things are just what our Lord forbids in the passage under consideration. Acknowledge no man as Father; for no man can impart or sustain spiritual life; install no man as an infallible teacher; allow no one to assume the office

¹ King James is very unfortunate here; in v. 8, "master" should be "teacher"; in v. 10, "master" (a different word) should be "guide."

of spiritual director; your relation to God and to Christ is as close as that of any other person.

A fearful indictment, with its accompanying sentence and denunciation, closes this portion of Christ's ministry. The nation's religious leaders are hypocrites, posing as teachers, fathers, and guides, while within and without they are the exact opposite of what they should be. They keep men from entering the kingdom. The proselytes they make are worse than their teachers, as always must be the case with teachers of evil. Their conception of sacredness is wholly external; their efforts after purity include only the outward; the opposition between their apparent and their real character is awful. To crown all, this wickedness is the culmination of the sin of generations. Nothing remained but to complete the iniquity of their fathers and the long withheld vengeance would fall. At the close of the sentence the words of the judge change into the wail of love—love refused and spurned, but love still filling the heart, weeping over the lost.

THE INTERVAL BETWEEN OUR LORD'S DEPARTURE FROM THE EARTH AND HIS RETURN

WHEN our Lord uttered His prediction of the approaching destruction of the Jewish temple, there was nothing in the magnificent structure, nothing in the political prospects of the nation, nothing in their religious condition, nothing in the policy of the Romans toward

the religious systems of the nations they subjugated, to indicate that such a catastrophe was imminent, or even among the possibilities. The Jews were never more attached to their temple, never held it in higher honor, were never more wedded to their national religion, while the uniform course of the imperial empire was to interfere as little as possible with the religion of a conquered nation, so long as it did not threaten the supremacy of Rome. To no vision but that of Jesus was the coming overthrow visible. He saw what seems to occur to no student of history, that the destiny of a nation, as that of an individual, is determined by its relation to Christ.

He was sitting alone on the Mount of Olives, gazing on the city which was so soon to witness the central facts in His own life, the central facts in the history of the world, the facts which would decide the destiny of mankind. His disciples approach Him privately and ask Him to tell them the time and signs of the consummation of the age. His reply is given at once, and is of greater length than any other recorded answer to a question. We make no attempt at a detailed interpretation of His words. Scriptural prophecy differs radically from pagan prediction. That foretells events; biblical prophecy declares principles; it is not spoken to satisfy curiosity or to impart knowledge, only as that knowledge determines conduct and is transmuted into life. Each word in this discourse is spoken for the one end always had in view by Christ—salvation. It has but one

thought—the preservation of those who are trusting in Christ from being misled. In every sentence resound Christ's opening words—"Take heed that no one lead you astray."

The great certainties of this discourse are unmistakable. The beginning and the end of the coming dispensation are to be separated by the interval announced in the parables of the kingdom, an interval corresponding to that which always occurs in the natural world between sowing and reaping. How long this interval, and when its end will come, no one but God knows. It will try faith and patience to the utmost, and the trial will prove fatal to the majority. The dangers to which Christians will be subjected which will overcome all but the most watchful are universal hatred and bitter persecutions on the part of the world, divisions and conflicts within the church, plausible errors inculcated by teachers clothed in prophet's garb, and to crown all, and more to be feared than all, an invasion of worldliness which shall smother the love of Christ.

The peril, which specially manifests itself in the closing period of this interval, arises from the mistakes which shall be made as to what the coming of Christ is. Multitudes will claim that they have discovered or rediscovered Christ; He is here, He is there, will be the cry. This is the consummation of the age; this is the triumph of Christianity; this is the fulfillment of the Christian hope; such shouts shall fill the air, and many

shall be led astray. No wonder that the love of the majority waxes cold; you cannot love the dead as you love the living; you cannot love a state of things as you love a person; you cannot love a memory as you love a presence; the heart demands a heart on which to lavish its affection, and in which to fasten its trust.

To those waiting and watching, the personal appearing of the Lord will not be unexpected or unwelcome. It will not take them unawares, nor will they be unrewarded. To the rest, it will come as the lightning flash, unheralded and overpowering. So this discourse of Christ addresses itself to three classes—the worldly, the unwatchful servant, the faithful and wise servant. For, although stumbling-blocks abound, false teachers are multiplied, and love grows cold, there will be the faithful elect who, enduring to the end, shall be saved.

With three vivid pictures of the consummation of the age our Lord closes His eschatological discourse. The first has to do with the personal relations of the church to its Head; the second, with the relations of the endowments of the church to its Lord; the third, with the relations of the nations to the church and to its King. While for reasons already stated, we cannot enter into any detailed interpretation of the predictions contained in this chapter, there are lessons here of the utmost importance to Christian living. This chapter should be so laid to our hearts that it govern every hour until Christ comes.

In the parable of the virgins, two truths are prominent. The first is that the test of acceptance will be not whether one entered on the Christian course, but whether he continued. The beginning of the Christian life is determined by our coming to Christ; the end is decided by our continuing in Christ. It is the truth set forth in our Lord's command and promise, "Abide in Me; if ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall bear much fruit; ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done for you." It is the truth told at the initial revelation of the kingdom in the parable of the sower; the husbandman's success is not the promise of a fair beginning but the final harvest. It is the constant warning of Christ, "He that endures to the end shall be saved." It is the truth of nature; if a plant does not grow, no matter what the promise of its first appearance, the gardener pulls it up and throws it away. In every walk of life the same test is applied. It is not enough that we can refer to the lighting of our lamps; if oil and light be wanting when Christ comes, there is no admittance to the heavenly banquet.

The second truth is that at that day borrowed religion will not suffice. Our associates and companions do us much good, but they cannot supply us with grace. Connection with the holiest and most useful of men will not insure acceptance at the last day; there must be the same personal relation to Christ at the close as at the beginning. So Paul writes, "Let every man prove

his own work, and then shall he have confidence in himself alone and not in another."

The parable of the talents has for its basis the great gospel truth that grace is bestowed as a trust. The endowments of the Spirit are not the personal possession of the recipients but are given to them to be improved for the glory of God and the good of others. Paul's discussion of spiritual gifts in the twelfth chapter of his first Epistle to the Corinthians begins with the fundamental fact that the manifestation of the Spirit is imparted to each man for the profit of others. So Peter directs, "As every man has received the gift even so let him minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." This gives force to the practical exhortation of the twelfth chapter of Romans; Christians are members of a body; each has its own office in the performance of which it will gain ability and strength. We are taught also in this parable that the excuses of the sinner are his own condemnation; out of his own mouth will he be condemned. The pleas which he urges are reasons for obedience to God.

In the august scene with which the account of this chapter closes, the judgment proceeds on the great principle of redemption, the identification of the Christian with Christ. This is the ultimate thought in all the formal descriptions by our Lord of the future. The tenth chapter of Matthew and the seventeenth chapter of the gospel of John are examples of this. Union with Christ is the first

CHAP. XXVI. 1-56.]

and last idea of Christianity, and the solemn sentences of this final judgment are but the repetition of the statement announced when the apostles—the representation of the church—were commissioned: “He that receiveth you receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me;” “And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.”

PREPARATIONS FOR THE DELIVERY OF JESUS TO HIS
ENEMIES

THE death of Christ on the cross was no after-thought on God's part. When Peter, on the day of Pentecost, charges the Jews

Chap. xxvi. with their awful guilt in crucifying Christ, he distinctly says:

1-56.

“This man, delivered up by the settled counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye through the hands of men without law did crucify and slay.” As the death, so the time and circumstances of the death were ordered by Him without interfering with the free action of Christ's enemies or lessening their guilt. We have a striking illustration of this in the crucifixion of Christ at the Passover contrary to the intention of the Jews. The story is told in the first sixteen verses of this chapter:

Baffled in their attempts to arrest Christ in any way authorized by law, the religious leaders, driven to desperation, finally determined to take

Him by craft and have Him put to death by the Romans on the charge of stirring up the people against the imperial power. But Christ's popularity with the masses of the people was such—for the world seemed to have gone after Him (John xii. 10) especially among the turbulent Galileans, great numbers of whom were at this time in Jerusalem in attendance on the feast of the Passover, that the officials did not dare to risk the explosion which would result from such an arrest on such a charge, and which would afford Pilate all necessary excuse for the most summary measures. So they said: "Not during the Feast, lest there be an uproar among the people."

But Christ our Passover, sacrificed for us, must be slain at the Feast. The great Paschal Lamb, the antitype of the numberless victims whose blood had flowed to predict His death, must lay down His life as did they, at the time and in the manner appointed. For fifteen hundred years had the Passover been kept by a redeemed people to prepare for the great event which it predicted, and now no craft can interfere with the divine purpose. How did it come to pass that God's designs were accomplished, and those of the Jews frustrated? How happened it that our Lord was apprehended, tried, and crucified at the Passover, contrary to the determination of the Jews?

It came by the manifestation of Mary's love and faith in the house of Simon at Bethany. The story, precious as it is, would not have been in-

CHAP. XXVI. 1-56.]

serted in Matthew's gospel on its own account. It is told by him, out of its chronological place, to give the reason why the plans of the Sanhedrin failed, and why Christ was apprehended at the beginning of the Feast.

It was a woman's love, a woman's instinct, a woman's acceptance of the divine method that brought about the desired result. Christian history is full of instances of the effective working of love in many ways all unknown and unanticipated by the loving one. In this case, Mary, acquiescing in what Christ had said of His coming death, prepares beforehand His body for the burial. In two respects, this act excited the anger and indignation of Judas. One is the lavish waste, as He viewed it, of the money expended for the purchase of the ointment. The three evangelists who record this incident characterize the ointment as "very costly," "very precious." In Mark its selling value is given as more than three hundred denaries. We learn from the parable of the laborers in the vineyard that a denary was the price of a day's labor. At this rate more than three hundred denaries would in our currency be more than three hundred dollars. While it seems impossible to fathom all of Judas' motives, and to explain his conduct satisfactorily, it is evident that his passions were greatly aroused by this extravagance. The other special feeling excited by the act of Mary and the acceptance and approval of it by the Lord was the evident certainty of the coming death of

Christ. Stirred to the utmost by these manifestations of the nature of the kingdom which Christ had in view, and of the method by which the kingdom was to come, his determination was formed. He hastened to the Sanhedrin, and bargained with them to deliver Christ into their hands without the knowledge of the multitude.

On that night the Jewish dispensation came to an end. The Passover, its great institution, had fulfilled its purpose; the Paschal Lamb it prepared for and prefigured was the next day to be slain. The same night saw the inauguration of a new feast which embodies the fundamental truth of Christianity, as the Passover embodied the fundamental truth of Judaism.

The new feast is a memorial of the death of Christ. "This do in remembrance of Me—for My memorial."¹ As Christianity is unique, so are its ordinances. What human society, in any age, ever instituted a feast to commemorate the death of its founder? Men celebrate with festivity and rejoicing the birth of their heroes, their accession to power, the date of the discoveries by which they enriched the world. Sometimes, indeed, the death is observed, but always as an occasion of sorrow, oftentimes of wrath, never with gladness. In other memorials, only those who are living at a particular time or in a particular country can take part in the erection of

¹ Vid. Lev. xxiv. 7 Sep, for the same word.

the monument; all others can only gaze and admire and envy. In the erection of the Christian memorial every lover of the Lord, down to the end of time, no matter in what age or land, can have as intimate a part as the most favored apostle. To-day, after the lapse of eighteen hundred years, the feast is observed as lovingly and reverently as ever.

But if it were only a memorial it would suffice to look reverently on the emblems and meditate on the truths they represent. It is more than a memorial, it is a covenant. "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you." And so we must eat the bread and drink the fruit of the vine. The covenants of bread and blood—covenants entered into by eating and drinking—were to an Oriental, expressions of a relation of the most binding character. It survives among us in the fact that we recognize equality and friendship in their full degree only with those with whom we eat. In all ages and with all peoples, this is the symbol of a peculiar relation.

It is still more. The highest aim and purpose of God is to bring us into communion with Himself. Union with God, the dream of the Pantheist, is the attainment of Christianity. So this ordinance is a communion. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" The ordinance instituted on the eve of

the death of Christ is thus a commemoration, a covenant, and a communion. It sets forth the source, the sustentation, and the fullness of that life which owes its existence and continuance to the death of Christ. Christ for us, and Christ in us, is its continual presentation.

Having sung praises, they go to Gethsemane. Here is a scene which has no parallel in the recorded life of Him who gave Himself for us. Into any examination or analysis of that anguish which forced our Lord to exclaim: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," we dare not presume to intrude. Sorrow is proverbially sacred; there is nothing in human life whose character is so universally revered. And as our Lord withdraws first from the apostles, then from the favored three, to pour His sorrows into the ear of His Father unheard by any human being, let no one intrude in any endeavor to ascertain the contents of that bitter cup. We stand afar off, with reverence for His grief, listening with adoring wonder to the words which He suffers to float to our ears, giving Him all the love and gratitude which our hearts can feel that He endured such griefs for us. O! the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. It was the final contest in that great conflict which began with what we style "the temptation," but inconceivably more awful and trying. It was the hour and the power of darkness. And we can well imagine, Gethsemane was far more terrible than Calvary.

THE CONDEMNATION OF CHRIST

WE have had occasion to speak of the uniqueness of Christianity, how radically separate and different it is from all religions. The same uniqueness characterizes its history. The literature of the world may be searched in vain for a parallel. Nothing in human composition approaches the absolutely white light of the account of the death of Christ. "Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on His head, and put on Him a purple robe. And they kept coming to Him and saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews,' and struck Him with rods. . . . Then they took Jesus and bearing for Himself the cross, He went forth into the place called Place of a Skull, where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on each side, and Jesus in the midst." Could there be anything more perfectly colorless? One is tempted to ask, how was it possible for the evangelists to refrain from every word expressing their sense of the enormity of the deed they were recording? How could they abstain from all expression of wonder, or indignation, or condemnation?

Think of another feature. In any detailed narrative of a death scene ever written except this, the chief, not to say the sole, object of attention is the dying man. What the spectators do or say, is a matter of little moment. In the detailed account by Matthew of the death of Christ, our Lord utters but four words, and of these one is a

124 The Condemnation of Christ

[CHAP. XXVI. 1-56.]

repetition: "Eli, Eli, lama sabacthani." Two long chapters, the longest in the gospel, are filled with what was done and said by Judas, and Peter, and the high priest, and Pilate, and Pilate's wife, and the centurion, and the Sanhedrin, and the multitude. The reason is, the death of Christ is unlike any other death. It is the centre of the world's history, the explanation of all things. It is the revelation of the heart of God and of the heart of the world; and as God has His representative here, so must all classes of the world have their representatives. Within the shadow of that cross there is nothing acted or uttered which is not an expression of something vitally allied to that appalling transaction. Men acted out only the impulses of their hearts; none the less did they utter eternal truths. The soldiers who platted the crown of thorns knew nothing of that sentence of sin which made thorns and thistles its product and representation; they had not the remotest idea that their fingers, as they plied the thorns into the mock diadem, were expressing symbolically the most important fact in the world, crowning with sin's symbol Him who was bearing the sins of the world. Every word spoken around the cross attested the necessity of that death. For while the cross is the power of God unto salvation it is the proof of man's desert of damnation. It is the revelation of God's love to man, and the revelation of man's hatred to God. It is man's condemnation and deliverance.

The first prominent actors brought before us are Judas and Peter. We shrink from such association of these names; yet here they are, and we cannot refrain from the study of their likeness and difference. Both were apostles; both sinned against Christ at a time and in a way that has fastened their sin indelibly to their memory; both became conscious of their sin in a very short time; both repented, and here the likeness ends. Of the one, our Lord spoke the most awful words ever applied to man: "It were good for that man if he had not been born;" the other was honored by the Saviour to open the kingdom of heaven; to fire the first gun of the campaign which shall never cease until the world acknowledges its allegiance to Christ; he was permitted to live for Him whom he denied and to die for Him.

Matthew significantly says: "Lo, Judas, one of the twelve." It must be one of the twelve. No other could deliver Him up. It was only because Judas had been admitted to the trusted circle of disciples, to the "sanctuary of Christ's devotions," only because he had accompanied Jesus so many times to the place where He was accustomed to pray with His disciples that he could tell Christ's enemies where to find Him. The sign by which Christ is designated to His captors expresses the relation which Judas held to the Lord. It is not the kiss on the cheek, the sign of affection between equals, for this would not have pointed out the leader, but the

kiss on the hand, the customary token given by the pupil saluting the teacher, the kiss employed by Orientals to express respect, obligation, gratitude. The appellation given by Christ, "Friend," is sometimes supposed to express the feeling of friendship; but this is not the word usually translated "friend," and it does not convey the least idea of friendship or affection. In the New Testament it occurs but four times, all in this gospel, and always has the idea of disapproval or censure. It is applied to those who are the subject of complaint in xi. 16, translated "fellows"; to the murmurer in xx. 13; to the man without the wedding garment, xxii. 12, and to Judas in this place. Judas approaches Christ, takes His hand and kisses it effusively, for this is the meaning of the word in verse 49. Peter undertakes to defend Christ with a sword. Christ reproves him, telling him that kingdoms founded by violence and sustained by physical force must necessarily come to their end in the same way. With this, all the disciples forsake Him and flee. They would have fought for Him and fallen with Him, but if there is nothing for them but quietly to suffer and die, their courage and affection fail.

Afraid to hold the session of the Sanhedrin by day, lest the turbulent Galileans, exasperated by the arrest of their prophet country-

Chap. xxvi. man, should excite a tumult among
 59. the people, the chief priests, the scribes and the elders, had been summoned to the court of the high priest to

CHAP. XXVI. 59.]

await the issue of the bargain with Judas. When the traitor had performed his work, and Christ had been delivered into the hands of the ecclesiastical authorities, the trial began. False witnesses came with their testimony, but to them and their assertions Christ made no reply. Disputes about past sayings and doings are always profitless; in this case they would be so especially. For the death of Christ would have been shorn of its significance had He been condemned on the ground of what these witnesses testified. If the rejection of Christ by the nation and by the world is to be the sin in which are summed up all other sins, if it is to hold such a relation to man that it is at once the essence of guilt and the ground of atonement, it must be because the nation and the world reject their creator and ruler. He was God's representative and for that men drove Him from the earth. He who hung on the cross was God manifested in the flesh, and therefore the crucifixion is both sin and atonement. Christ's claim to be the head of the nation, the fulfillment and purpose of all the Mosaic institutions, His assertion of a nature which enabled Him to say, "I and My Father are one," was the reason and the only reason why He was put to death. If His Messiahship is accepted by the people, if the Messianic prophecies all find their fulfillment in Him, there is before the nation a calamity in the estimate of the rulers the most astounding and deplorable. When the high priest put Christ on oath as to His nature

and office, our Lord, silent under the accusations which the witnesses brought against Him, promptly replies, "I am the Christ, the Son of God; moreover, ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven." On this they adjudge Him worthy of death.

Christ gives His divine nature the place which it occupies in His teachings because it is the apprehension of His divine nature that saves men. We hear a great deal now about rediscovering the human nature of Christ. It was not the recognition of His human nature but of His divine, which called forth the benediction of our Lord, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father who is in heaven." The gospel narrative of the life and death of Christ cannot be understood without the clear and constant recognition of what it is in Christ which makes Him our Saviour, what it is in us that saves us, what it was in Christ that made the Jews so hate Him that they could not stop short of putting Him to death, and what it is in human character that is so manifested in the death of Christ that by that death He condemned sin in the flesh; what that unbelief in Christ is that makes it so great a sin that the Holy Spirit in convicting the world of sin passes by every other form of guilt and fastens attention on this alone: "He shall convince the world of sin, because they believe not in Me."

THE DENIAL BY PETER

IN closest connection with the account of the condemnation of Christ is the story, so familiar to all, of Peter's denial of his Master. Why is this told? Surely not because the incident is an interesting one, nor because it furnishes a warning against self-confidence. The transactions here are too solemn and critical for any episode which has no vital connection with the great events recorded.

The sacrifice of God's dear son is matter of the deepest admiration and gratitude only on the ground that the death of Christ is an absolute necessity for the spiritual renovation of man. If man's moral recovery is possible by any or all other agencies, the death of Christ is without excuse. Before Christ came, every means of human improvement was tried. In other than moral respects, man, intellectual, physical, æsthetic, was developed in the highest degree. The attainments of Greece, for example, are the admiration and despair of all ages. But outside of Judea, the knowledge of God had disappeared from the earth, His worship was unknown, and all over the world the nations were saturated with the degradations and cruelties of idolatry. Among other methods, a nation had been selected to whom God specially revealed Himself. He separated them from all other peoples, gave to them laws and institutions which would fit them

in the best manner to fulfill their destiny of making Him known; finally, for thirty years He dwelt among them, and the end was, that while the unclean spirit of idolatry was cast out from the nation, seven spirits worse than the first took possession, and the guilt and doom of this people were worse than those of Sodom. Still more, the incarnate Son of God had chosen twelve men, had associated them with Himself for three years, so that they had been brought under the wisest teaching, the most perfect example, the holiest personal influence, and when the final trial comes, they all break down, and break down in the most deplorable way. Not to dwell on the case of Judas and the other disciples, Peter, the spokesman of the apostles, their appointed representative, denies with cursing and oaths all knowledge of Christ. The knowledge of God which is the great end of God's dealings with man, that knowledge which is eternal life, has vanished from the earth in Jew and Gentile, and now is denied by the man who speaks for Christ's chosen disciples. Ah! it is more than proven that it is not enough for man to have Christ *for* him, that it is not enough to have Christ with him, he must have Christ in him. This can only be by Christ dying and being made alive for us, and by our dying and being made alive with Him, and so being made one with Christ as He is one with the Father. We must be able to say with Paul, "I was crucified with Christ; I no longer live, but Christ lives in me,

CHAP. XXVI. 69.]

and the life which I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me." And this is true of the most moral and upright man in the world. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."

When Christ was exalted to the right hand of God the Father, He received the Spirit that He imparted to His followers. See what a difference the reception of the Spirit made with Peter and the rest of the disciples. Contrast their timidity and cowardice before the crucifixion with their boldness and energy after the Day of Pentecost. Behold the entire transformation! Self-abnegation has taken the place of ambition; love has displaced strife. In every act of life the fruits of the Spirit are manifest. They count it all joy to suffer for the dear name. They forsake all that they have, and giving themselves without reserve to the work of making Christ known, after lives of self-denial, of dangers, suffering and persecution, they welcome death by the hands of those whom they have tried to save. Christ in them the hope of glory has transformed and transfigured them, making them shine as lights in the world.

That pitiful cry of Peter, "I do not know Him," is the cry of a lost world at the cross of Christ. It was false as Peter meant it; it was true, as were all the other words and actions around the cross, in the truest of all senses.

TRIAL BEFORE PILATE

AFTER the condemnation of Jesus by the Sanhedrin, He is taken to Pilate. Whatever was the cause of the persistent determination of that body to have Christ put to death by Roman law and Roman method, the result was that both Jew and Gentile joined in His crucifixion. His death was the sin of the world, and it was necessary that the two great divisions of mankind be manifest partakers in the guilt.

When questioned by the governor, Jesus avowed Himself King of the Jews. We learn from John's Gospel that the answer was accompanied by so explicit a statement of the nature of His kingdom that Pilate saw at once the groundlessness of the accusation brought by the Jews. Anxious to save Jesus from a fate which He had done nothing to deserve, the perplexed governor availed himself of the custom of conciliating a conquered and restless nation by releasing a political prisoner at their great national festival. He gave them their choice between a leader of a seditious insurrection, Bar Abbas—son of a father—and the true Son of the Father.¹ Which do they prefer? Both had offered themselves as deliverers of the nation;

¹ Bar means "son"; Bar Jonah, son of Jonah, Bar Timeus, son of Timeus. Abba is "father." If we may trust Origen, the majority of manuscripts in his time read "*Jesus Barabbas*." Meyer adopts this reading, as did Tischendorf in his earlier editions,

CHAP. XXVII. II.]

the one from physical bondage by physical force, the other from spiritual bondage by spiritual methods. Which will the Jews accept, the false son of the father or the true, the fleshly or the spiritual? It is the choice constantly set before men between the life-giver and the robber; between the good Shepherd who gives His life for the sheep that they may have it more abundantly, and the thief who comes to steal and kill and destroy.

Foiled in this effort, Pilate is compelled to ask that question of infinite importance, "What shall I then do with Jesus?" the question which meets every man to whom Christ is offered. If Christ is not accepted, no matter to what the man may turn, whether to open and avowed sin, or to some form of moral life, still the question of what to do with Jesus remains. No attempt to evade the necessity of decision will be successful. If Pilate assigns the prisoner to execution, he cannot free himself from guilt by any denial of responsibility or symbolic washing of hands. It is the act not the words which determines the character. Balaam may sing the sweetest song of the coming blessedness of the people who are the possession of Jehovah, may offer the prayer which has been so often reëchoed, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like His," but if he do not join the righteous in life, he will be found at the last under the banners of Moab, dying on the battlefield among the enemies of Israel (Numbers xxiii. 10; Joshua xiii.

22). Men go down to perdition against their clear convictions, their wishes, longings, knowledge, prayers, because they do not say, "I will." They go reluctantly, sorrowfully, holding back all the time, yet going down because they will not act in accordance with their knowledge and judgment.

THE DEATH OF CHRIST

THE sentence is spoken and Christ is delivered to be crucified. Apparently Christ has been on trial before Pilate, really Pilate has been on trial before Christ. The verdict which condemned Christ has long ago been reversed, He has been acquitted and Pilate condemned, and in this reversal have all men concurred. The present estimate by the world of those who are brought prominently before us in this scene of Christ's trial and condemnation, shows us how true it is that every man will finally be judged by his relation to Christ. Pilate and Herod and Judas, widely different in other respects, are all consigned to infamy because of their attitude toward the Lord Jesus. They have come to shame and everlasting contempt before the resurrection. No parent now ever calls a child Judas, Herod, Pilate. The names of John and Mary and those of the obscure Galileans who most loved Christ, are the choice names of Christendom. How men treat Christ decides their position, and that judgment will be universal and eternal.

Pilate's sentence was carried into immediate execution. Little did the actors in that tragedy dream that they were taking a part in the central act in the world's history; that men's eyes would be fixed on the cross to the remotest ages. The words then spoken were destined to resound while the world stands; all that was said and done was freighted with the fullest meaning. The "Seven words of the Cross" have furnished themes on which Christians have loved to meditate and preachers have delighted to dwell. The import of these words will never be exhausted however protracted our meditations or profound our sermons. But the words of the cross are more than seven. On Golgotha, the reverent listener hears the voice of Christ, the voice of God, the voice of man; for the cross is the revelation of the deepest nature of man, of Christ, of God. He that has an ear let him hear what each of these speaks. If he hear not these, his ear is useless.

On the cross hangs God's Son and man's King, the Son of God and the Son of man, God embodied in the perfect man. His assertion of these relations condemned Him to death, and His claims are not only denied, but mocked and derided. The robes of royalty, the crown of thorns, the sceptre, the salutation, the bended knee, the inscription on the cross as well as the crucifixion itself give man's answer to the demand of Christ to be accepted as God's representative and man's King.

Why hangs He there? Why is a life so resplendent with the glories of heaven, so devoted to the welfare of men, so innocent and undefiled, cut short by violent hands? Why is such a career made to close in derision and agony? Ordinarily the death of a fellow-man in the perfection and maturity of his manhood touches the heart as does no other event. Why do the Jewish leaders, men high in religious and social position, walk around the cross and laugh at the dying groans of the sufferer, and jeer Him as He writhes in agony? Why? It is the testimony of human nature to its own moral character. The answer of man to the declaration of the Father, "This is My beloved Son," is "Come down from the cross and we will believe Thee; let God deliver Him, if He delights in Him." We are often reproached for our belief in human depravity. Listen to the testimony of the cross on human nature in its relation to God. God comes into the world and men refuse to obey Him; they put Him to death in company with two malefactors, omitting no possible ingredient of shame or pain.

Why hangs Christ there? Because only in this way can men be saved. If He saves others, He cannot save Himself. He is God's Son, come to do the will of His Father; He must meet sin at its worst and overcome it. He is bearing our sins in His own body on the tree. Man, dead in trespass and sins, will perish forever unless a new life is imparted to him. There can be no

CHAP. XXVII. 36.]

life anywhere except through death. Our daily lives are sustained only through the death of whatever it is that ministers to our existence. Christ imparts life to others by dying Himself. And in the last analysis, holiness is consecration.

But as we listen, we hear a voice more wonderful than either of these, wonderful as they are. Why is this cross erected? The answer is that wonderful verse in John's gospel, "God so loved the world." "God's love for man sent our Lord Jesus Christ to the cross." "I came down from heaven," He says, "not to do My own will but the will of Him that sent Me." We forget this, but Christ never does. "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life that I might take it again." The scribes and Pharisees complain of Christ because He receives sinners. How does Christ justify Himself? I fancy if we undertook this, we would speak of the worth of the soul, of the greatness of eternity, of the blessedness of heaven, of the terrors of eternal punishment. What does Christ say? Not one word of all these: "I save sinners because God does so love to have them saved." In the blessed parable in which He defends His course, it is the joy of the shepherd, of the owner, of the father; that is the spring of all the joy of others. God loves men, and if it be necessary for their salvation that Christ abandon heaven, He shall abandon it. If it be necessary that Christ die, He shall die. If it be necessary that in the hour of extremest agony, the Father hide His face from Him, it shall

be done. "Herein is love; not that we loved Him, but that He loved us, and gave His Son to be a propitiation for our sins."

Sin, holiness, love; these are the words of the cross.

The demand and the promise in the cry, "Come down from the cross and we will believe Thee," is the world's cry and proffer now. Men find no fault with Christ or His teachings so far as human relative duties are affected. It is the crucified Christ to whom they object. Admit the necessity of His death, and you declare that man has no power to save himself. And because the Christian has seen the absolute necessity of that sacrifice for his own salvation, and because he has seen that the death of Christ is the legitimate consummation of Christ's self-sacrifice, his continual cry is: "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The world makes another demand: "Let God deliver Him now, if He delights in Him." The only proof of God's love, and the only value of divine relationship which the world recognizes, is deliverance from suffering. Too many Christians are bowing down to this mean and degrading idol of material prosperity, and are basing their defence of Christianity on its agency in promoting physical comfort. Books are written and sermons preached to prove that Christianity has advanced civilization, raised the price of real estate, removed the evils which afflict humanity. To such persons the miracles evince nothing but

CHAP. XXVII. 36.]

a desire to remove bodily pain. They tell us that godliness has promise of this life. Most true, God be thanked! But what is the promise of godliness? Bank stock? horses and carriages? real estate? God flings these to the most worthless of men. The promise of godliness is godliness—salvation from sin, spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. Holiness *has* the promise of the life that now is. As Peter says, God's divine power has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness, precious and exceeding great promised blessings, through which we have become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world.

The worst of the current theory is, that it completely eliminates the love of God, making it merely pity or compassion. God's love makes us bear, not only the evils incident to a residence in this sinful world, but all those sufferings which are consequent on the presence of love and holiness in a world of sinners; the disciple is no greater than his Lord, and we cannot escape the evils which come now as they did in Christ's time on an uncompromising righteousness in an evil age. It is those who suffer with Him who shall be glorified with Him. Christ's head was crowned with thorns; shall our feet tread on roses?

Our Lord would not comply with the demands of those who rejected Him. He would not go, as His church should not go, to a sinful world for instruction. When the hour came He yielded up

[CHAP. XXVIII. I.]

His spirit to Him who gave it. The rent veil of the temple declared the acceptance of the perfect sacrifice that removed the barrier which sin had erected between God and man, and opened the way into the inner sanctuary. The quaking earth and the rending rocks manifested the sympathy of nature with its expiring Lord. Death is conquered by Christ's dying, the realm of the grave is invaded and its trophies brought forth. Death evokes a love which has not before been shown. Affection takes courage, avows itself, claims the body, puts it into a new tomb, and sits down to watch it with weak faith but with most tender and unconquerable love. The enemies of Christ take precautions against any removal of the body, but as in all such cases, the wrath of man is made to praise God.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

FROM the verdict of the earthly tribunals, Christ appeals to the High Court of Heaven. His appeal is heard, the decision re-

Chap. xxviii. versed, an angel is sent to roll
I. back the door of the prison house
 and bid the condemned go free.

Christ's first manifestation of Himself is in accordance with the great principles of His future work. Love revealed itself to love. The two women who had the honor and unspeakable delight of the first revelation of the risen Christ had not faith enough to make them believe they would see the risen Redeemer, but they had love

CHAP. XXVIII. 16.]

enough to bring them in the first dawn of the morning with their spices to anoint Him. They wasted their treasures, but they saw the Lord. It is not the correctness of our views, nor the adaptedness of our plans that will win the divine approval; the love which prompts the act makes the mistake a matter of no moment. At the beginning of this new life we hear the words so often recurring in God's gracious dealings with man, "Fear not."

THE COMMISSION

ON a Galilean mountain are spoken the last words of Christ to the disciples. Matthew is the gospel of the mountain. The

Chap. xxviii. great sections of Christ's teaching
16. start from the mountain-tops. On

the mountain He first proclaims the kingdom, its nature, its characteristics, its laws, its subjects. On the Mount of Transfiguration is the first revelation of supernal glory through death. On the Mount of Olives He assumes His place as the Son of David, and rides into Jerusalem asserting His royal character and claims. On the Mount of Olives again, He unfolds the panorama of the troublous times between His ascension and His personal return. On the Galilean mountain He declares His universal rule, announces the commission, and encircles the disciples with His promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the age."

The Jewish Messiah has become the Saviour

of the world; the most restricted religion has been exchanged for the most comprehensive; the earthly and temporal has given place to the spiritual and eternal. And all has been so accomplished in accordance with the principles in the Old Testament and in nature on which God has always acted, that our gospel recording this most wonderful revolution known to human history, ends as it begins with Jesus Immanuel, God with us.

Synopsis of the Gospel According to
Matthew

Synopsis of the Gospel According to Matthew

IN this gospel the Kingdom of Righteousness promised in the Old Testament is presented to the Jews; is rejected by them; Christ rejects the nation; founds the church.

Hence Matthew is the gospel of the Kingdom; the gospel of Righteousness; the gospel of Rejection; the Jewish gospel. These characteristics determine the law of inclusion and exclusion.

I. The King, Son of David, heir of the throne; son of Abraham, heir of the promise; His Jewish genealogy; His human nature; His divine nature; His name, office, relation. Chap. I.

II. Presented to the Jews. To the heads of the nation, civil and religious; the results to Herod, the Sanhedrin, the Magi; to the birth-place of Christ, to the family into which He entered, to Christ. Chap. II.

III. The Kingdom offered to the nation. Its approach announced by the herald; its beginnings—Christ enters on His redemptive work; on His contest with Satan; on His public ministry of teaching and healing. Chaps. III., IV.

The Kingdom portrayed; its righteousness, subjects, king and laws. Chaps. V.--VIII.

The Kingdom in promise and process, restoring man physically, mentally, spiritually; ten miracles delivering from the corruption, paralysis, fever of sin; from bondage to nature, evil spirits, unforgiven sin; from death; from the blind, dumb, demonized state which prevents the sight, acknowledgment and reception of these blessings. Chaps. VIII., IX.

The Propagation of the Kingdom; to the time of Christ's death to the destruction of Jerusalem; to the end of the dispensation. Chap. X.

The Reception of the Kingdom; misunderstood; perverted; rejected; accepted. Chap. XI.

The Antagonism to the Kingdom; fleshly ties disrupted, and spiritual relation established. Chap. XII.

Mysteries of the Kingdom set forth in parable, miracle, plain statement, culminating in a declaration of the nature of Christ, of the nature and office of the church, of the nature of redemption, of the nature of Christianity and the presentation of the Kingdom on the Mount of Transfiguration. Chaps. XIII.-XVII. 8.

During the delay of this Kingdom, its power (the epileptic boy) and its privilege (the half shekel) are veiled; the duty of the subject of the Kingdom is shown in His relation to sin; to the sinner; to the law of His conduct; to worldly possessions. The rewards and the honors of the Kingdom. Two blind men received sight. Chaps. XIX., XX.

IV. CHRIST PUBLICLY ASSUMES THE OFFICE AND

WORK OF THE KING; Makes a royal entry into Jerusalem; cleanses the temple, blasts the fig-tree; meets His opponents—unbelief, worldliness, rationalism, formalism—silences them; pronounces their doom and departs from the temple. He portrays the dangers and duties incident to His coming again, and declares that the eternal state of the nations shall be determined by their relation to Him. Chaps. XXI.–XXV.

V. The Preparation for the Delivering up of Christ. The anointing in the house of Simon the Leper; the agreement of Judas Iscariot with the chief priests; the institution of the communion; the agony in Gethsemane. Chap. XXVI. 47.

VI. The trial, condemnation, crucifixion and resurrection. The arrest; the trial before the Sanhedrin; the denial by Peter; the testimony of Judas; the trial before Pilate; the mocking by the soldiers; the crucifixion; the accompanying portents; the resurrection; the appearances of Christ to the disciples; the meeting in Galilee; the commission.

71045
END

By Rev. F. B. Meyer

The Shepherd Psalm. Illustrated. Printed in two colors. 12mo, cloth, gilt top, boxed, \$1.25; full gilt, \$1.50.

The Bells of Is. Echoes from my early pastorates. With portrait. 12mo, cloth, 75 c.

Prayers for Heart and Home. 8vo, flex. cloth, 75 c.

Paul: a Servant of Jesus Christ. 12mo, cloth, \$1.00.

Old Testament Heroes. 8 vols., 12mo, cloth, each, \$1.00; the set, boxed, \$8.00.

Abraham.	Elijah.	Jeremiah.	Joshua.
David.	Israel.	Joseph.	Moses.

The Expository Series. 12mo, cloth, each \$1.00; the set, boxed, \$4.00.

Tried by Fire.	The Way into the Holiest.
Christ in Isaiah.	The Life and Light of Men.

The Christian Life Series. 18mo, cloth, each, 30 c.

The Shepherd Psalm	Through Fire and Flood.
Christian Living.	The Glorious Lord.
The Present Tenses	Calvary to Pentecost.
The Future Tenses	Key Words to the Inner Life.

* * The first four also issued in flexible, decorated cloth, 16mo, each, 50 c.; the set, boxed, \$2.00.

Addresses. 12mo, paper, each, 15 c.; cloth, each, net, 30 c.

Meet for the Master's Use	A Castaway
The Secret of Guidance	Light on Life's Duties

Saved and Kept. Long 16mo, cloth, 50 c.

Cheer for Life's Pilgrimage. Long 16mo, cloth, 50 c.

Peace, Perfect Peace. 18mo, cloth, 25 c.

The Psalms. Notes and Readings. 18mo, cloth, 60 c.

Envelope Series of Booklets. Packets Nos. 1 and 2, each containing 12 Tracts, assorted, net, 20 c.

Choice Extracts. 24mo, paper, each, 5 c.; per doz. net, 35 c.; 16mo, paper, 15 c.

Fleming H. Revell Company

NEW YORK: 158 Fifth Ave. CHICAGO: 63 Washington St.
TORONTO: 154 Yonge St.

By Rev. Andrew Murray

Authorized, copyright editions.

THE SCHOOL OF PRAYER. 2 vols, 12mo,
cloth, each 75c.; the set, boxed, \$1.50.

The Ministry of Intercession: A Plea for More
Prayer.

With Christ in the School of Prayer: Thoughts
on Our Training for the Ministry of Intercession.

THE WITH CHRIST SERIES. 6 vols., 16mo.
Paper, each 25c.

Cloth, each 35c.; the set, boxed, \$2.00.

With Christ.

Holy in Christ.

Abide in Christ.

The Spirit of Christ.

Like Christ.

The Master's Indwelling.

The New Life. Words of God for Young Disciples
of Christ. 16mo, cloth, 50c.

The Children for Christ. 12mo, cloth, \$1.00.

The True Vine. Meditations for a Month on John
xv. 1-16. Long 16mo, cloth, 50c.

Waiting on God. Daily Messages for a Month.
Long 16mo, cloth, 50c.

The Lord's Table. Long 16mo, cloth, 50c.

The Deeper Christian Life. An Aid to its Attain-
ment. 16mo, cloth, 50c.

Jesus Himself. 18mo, cloth, 25c.

Love Made Perfect. 18mo, cloth, 25c.

Humility. The Beauty of Holiness. 18mo, cloth, 30c.

Be Perfect. Meditations for a Month. 18mo, cloth, 30c.

Let Us Draw Nigh! 18mo, cloth, 30c.

Why Do You Not Believe? 18mo, cloth, 30c.

Money: Thoughts for God's Stewards. 18mo,
cloth, 25c.

The Spiritual Life. 12mo, cloth, 50c.

The Holiest of All. An exposition of the Epistle
to the Hebrews. 8vo, cloth, net \$2.00.

Envelope Series of Booklets. 12 tracts. Per dozen,
net, 20c.; per hundred, net, \$1.50

Fleming H. Revell Company

NEW YORK: 158 Fifth Ave. CHICAGO: 63 Washington St.
TORONTO: 154 Yonge St.

By Charles H. Spurgeon

The Soul-Winner; or, How to Lead Sinners to the Saviour. *3d edition.* 12mo, cloth, \$1.25.

The Autobiography of Charles H. Spurgeon. Compiled from his Diary Records and Letters; by his wife and his private secretary. Profusely illustrated. 4 vols., large 8vo, cloth, each, \$3.50; the set, net \$10.00.

Library of Practical Illustration. 3 vols., 12mo, cloth, each, \$1.00; the set, boxed, \$3.00.

Barbed Arrows.

Feathers for Arrows.

Spurgeon's Gems.

The Golden Alphabet. Being a Devotional Commentary on CXIX. Psalm. 12mo, cloth, \$1.00.

My Sermon Notes. A Selection from Outlines of Discourses delivered at the Metropolitan Tabernacle. 4 vols., 12mo, cloth, each \$1.00; the set, boxed, \$4.00.

1. Genesis to Proverbs.

3. Matthew to Acts.

2. Ecclesiastes to Malachi.

4. Romans to Revelation.

Morning and Evening. Daily Readings. 24mo, cloth, gilt edges, boxed, \$1.25.

The Parables of Our Lord. 8vo, cloth, \$2.50.

The Miracles of Our Lord. 2 vols., 8vo, cloth, ea., \$2.50.

The Teachings of Nature in the Kingdom of Grace. 12mo, cloth, \$1.00.

Gleanings Among the Sheaves. 18mo, cloth, gilt top, 60 cents.

All of Grace. For those seeking salvation. 16mo, paper, 15 cents; cloth, net, 30 cents.

According to Promise; or, the Lord's Method of Dealing with His Chosen People. 16mo, paper, 15 cents; cloth, net, 30 cents.

Twelve Sermons Series. 8vo, cloth, each, 50 cents.

Christmas.

Prayer.

Faith.

Prodigal Son.

Holy Spirit.

Resurrection.

Inquirers.

Second Coming.

Missions.

Soul-Winning Sermons.

New Year.

Striking Sermons.

Plan of Salvation.

Troubled and Tried.

Praise.

Unbelief.

Charles H. Spurgeon. *2d edition.* By Rev. J. J. Ellis, a graduate of the Pastor's College. 12mo, cloth, \$1.00.

Charles H. Spurgeon. His Life and Ministry. By Jesse Page. Illustrated. 12mo, cloth, 75 cents.

Personal Reminiscences of Spurgeon. By Rev. W. S. Williams. With fac-similes of letters and other illustrations. 12mo, cloth, \$1.50.

Fleming H. Revell Company

New York: 158 Fifth Ave. Chicago: 63 Washington St.
Toronto: 154 Yonge St.

2575 W4 15

BS 2575 .W4 1900

Weston, Henry Griggs, 1820-
1909.

Matthew, the genesis of the
New Testament

NO LONGER PROPERTY OF
UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY LIBRARY

